THE SHAKERITE

VOL. 90 ISSUE I DEC. 9, 2019

GUEST ‘RITERS

Jordan Green

Everybody, Breathe, Page 56
Jordan Green is a senior at the high school. He is Treasurer of Class of 2020 for student council, Writing Center Intern, a member of SGORR and is a captain of the tennis team. Green describes his experience after posting his opinion on vaping and nicotine addiction to Facebook.

Valerie Doersen

Text and Context, Page 59
Valerie Doersen has taught English at the high school for 15 years. Doersen writes about how a controversial novel can elevate the conversation in class.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

The Editorial Board governs Shakerite opinion, writes ‘Rite Idea editorials and serves as a guiding force for The Shakerite on policy and practice. The Board includes (left to right, back to front): Mae Nagusky, Ainsley Snyder, Ethan Bloch, Quinn Cutri, Ana Butze, Danielle Krantz and Olivia Warren. Ezra Marks serves as an alternate. Read the ‘Rite Idea on page 40.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I have been a journalist all through high school, and in some situations, it's been hard to decide whether to be a reporter or a regular kid.

My freshman year, when friends and family admonished me because The Shakerite published a story when former social studies teacher Timothy Mitchell wasn't indicted — and another story when he later was — I defensively tried to explain that there had been two rulings, but it seemed that no one understood the distinction.

Later that year, there was a lockdown during my Spanish class, and I wasn't sure whether to be frightened or start interviewing my classmates.

My sophomore year, I wanted to stand in solidarity with the 17 Parkland shooting victims. But, I knew that if I reported on the March 14 protest, I would have to stand to the side.

I didn't know what to do. I was stumped.

Ultimately, I reported on the 500 students who stood in a circle on the turf field for 17 minutes in 27-degree weather because that historic event needed to be documented.

The importance of journalism, in my mind, is to amplify voices that go unheard and inform the community about important events, ideas, problems and accomplishments. If I had participated instead of writing that story, there's no way the 1,943 people in the U.S. and 49 people from 13 different countries who read it would have known about Shaker's walkout.

That same day, students, nearly all African-American, staged a sit-in outside the main office and along the first-floor hallways. They argued that the principal had exercised a racially-motivated double standard when it came to protests. I wanted to join them, but I told my biology teacher I had to use the restroom — and started to interview anybody willing to talk.

My junior year, my mom told me she had been raped when she was 23 years old. I wanted to write a column about that crime and how it shaped our lives. I worried it would be insensitive, but I checked with my mom and got her approval. As long as sharing what I had learned helped one student who needed to see a survivor's story, publishing that column was worth it.

Later that year, I awoke to a text that Woodbury teacher Aisha Fraser's estranged husband had stabbed her to death in her driveway. I was shocked. I never thought someone I knew could be murdered. I saw two texts from editors saying that they didn't want to cover her death because it would have been too emotionally difficult. Even though I was never Fraser's student, I felt a duty to document her story. And it got really hard. But I don't regret writing the obituary; it helped others begin healing.

When the high school went into lockdown because of fights Nov. 22 during seventh period, my friends and family asked if I needed a ride home because they were scared about the rumors of weapons and threats. "No, thank you. I am on the story," I said. Forty-five minutes after the school day ended, we published it.

After nearly four years at The Shakerite, I realized that when life happens, I have to react. I have to be sensitive to everyone's feelings and make the most humane decision. So, I hope at least some readers find something helpful in this issue, whether it's a chance to think about educational tracking or police accountability or committing to a social justice movement.

Because for this issue, we were all journalists.

Mae Nagusky
Editor-in-Chief

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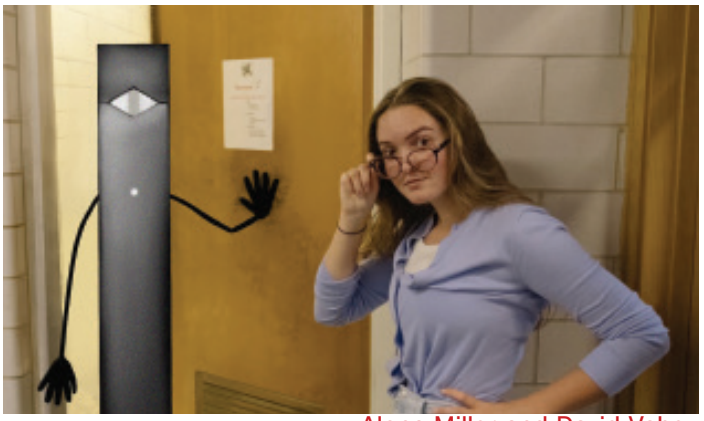

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Striving For a Better Shaker

Alona Miller

As the 2019-20 school year opened, Principal Eric Juli and Superintendent David Glasner embraced their new roles

Danielle Krantz Campus and City Editor

Principal Eric Juli and Superintendent David Glasner are trying to set the district on the right path following a year of turmoil and temporary leadership.

"I think that we need to be really clear about what the purpose of school is, and how we're supporting all of our students to achieve that purpose," Juli said.

Juli said that students are the most important people in any school, and he is striving to connect with them. He said he hopes that every student will develop a bond with an adult in the high school.

"Kids are what is most important," Juli said. "We need to do everything in our power to create conditions where every single student can learn every single day. And that does not happen by accident. You have to create systems and structures where kids feel cared for and kids feel supported, where every single student feels connected to at least one adult in this building."

Juli previously served as the principal of Design

Lab Early College High School in Cleveland from 2011 until 2019.

Design Lab, which focuses on project-based learning, features a makerspace where students design and create projects. Juli said he wants to create a similar space at Shaker Heights High School. He also wants to bring a version of a program called X Block to Shaker. X Block allows students to partner with community businesses and organizations on Wednesday afternoons 12 times a semester.

"We had kids at the Foundry learning to row. We had kids at Soulcraft Woodshop building furniture. We had kids at Skidmark Garage learning to repair motorcycles," he said. "I look forward to bringing some version of that here eventually."

In one way, Juli reaches every person in the high school every day — and has since the first day of school, when he began playing three-minute excerpts of diverse music tracks over the P.A. system during passing time.

He said he plays music between classes to create a common experience in the school community. "Whether you like the music or not, it doesn't matter — we're talking about the music. The music's playing. We're enjoying it," he said. "People are saying, 'I wish you played this,' 'I wish you didn't play that.' It's a common experience," he said.

Juli speaks to the whole school daily as well. "Good morning, Shaker Heights High School. This is Mr. Juli with a few words of wisdom," he says at the start of second period every day. He then reads a brief introduction and a quotation from a notable historic figure. He asks a related question and concludes, "With something to think about, this is Mr. Juli. Make it a great day, or not. The choice is yours."

Juli selects the daily message from a curriculum created by "Project Wisdom," a character education organization. When he found himself in the Large Auditorium second period Oct. 11 to introduce the annual Hall of Fame assembly, he delivered words of wisdom to the audience from the stage — while wearing a toga and a laurel wreath — before joining

Listen to a conversation with the reporter who wrote this story in our podcast, **The Shake.**

Juli's former school, where he served as principal from 2011 until 2019, focuses on project-based learning. **Photo by Mae Nagusky.**

a Latin class activity. When he reached his sign-off statement, the audience of juniors and seniors recited, "Make it a great day, or not. The choice is yours," along with him.

Weekly video announcements produced by students are another of Juli's efforts to engage the school. He sends a link to the video file to teachers and asks that they show the video during class. He often interacts with students before school at the main entrance, during lunch periods and in the hallways. He said that school should be fun.

"I think it's OK to have fun in school; we work really hard, and we should be able to have fun. I mean that not just for the students. I mean that for all the adults that work here, too — the faculty and staff," he said.

Junior Rebecca Rhodes met with Juli to discuss creating a film program at the high school. She said he is very supportive of students, and it is easy to talk to him because he wants to address their concerns just as much as they do.

Juli said that by being available, listening and not pretending to have all the answers, he can collaborate to find solutions. He said that if he supports everyone, events like those of last year are less likely to occur.

Last school year, English teacher Jody Podl was placed on administrative leave Oct. 10, 2018 and investigated for claims of bullying, harassment and intimidation. The administration placed then-Principal Jonathan Kuehnle on administrative leave Nov. 1, while he was investigating Podl. The assistant cheerleading coach resigned Oct. 11 following allegations of body shaming. Head football coach Jarvis Gibson resigned Oct. 26. A hectic community meeting ensued Nov. 8 in the Large Auditorium.

> "I think it's OK to have fun in school; we work really hard, and we should be able to have fun. I mean that not just for the students. I mean that for all the adults that work here, too."
>
> Eric Juli
> *principal*

Then, the district reassigned Kuehnle from his position of high school principal to non-specified administrative duties. A Shaker Heights Teachers' Association grievance was filed Nov. 8 on the basis of communication, academic freedom without interference and the lack of due process for Podl. The district withdrew its discipline of Podl Feb. 11, and the grievance was sustained as legitimate April 22.

Senior Nya McNutt said that communication is important, especially after all of the events that transpired last year.

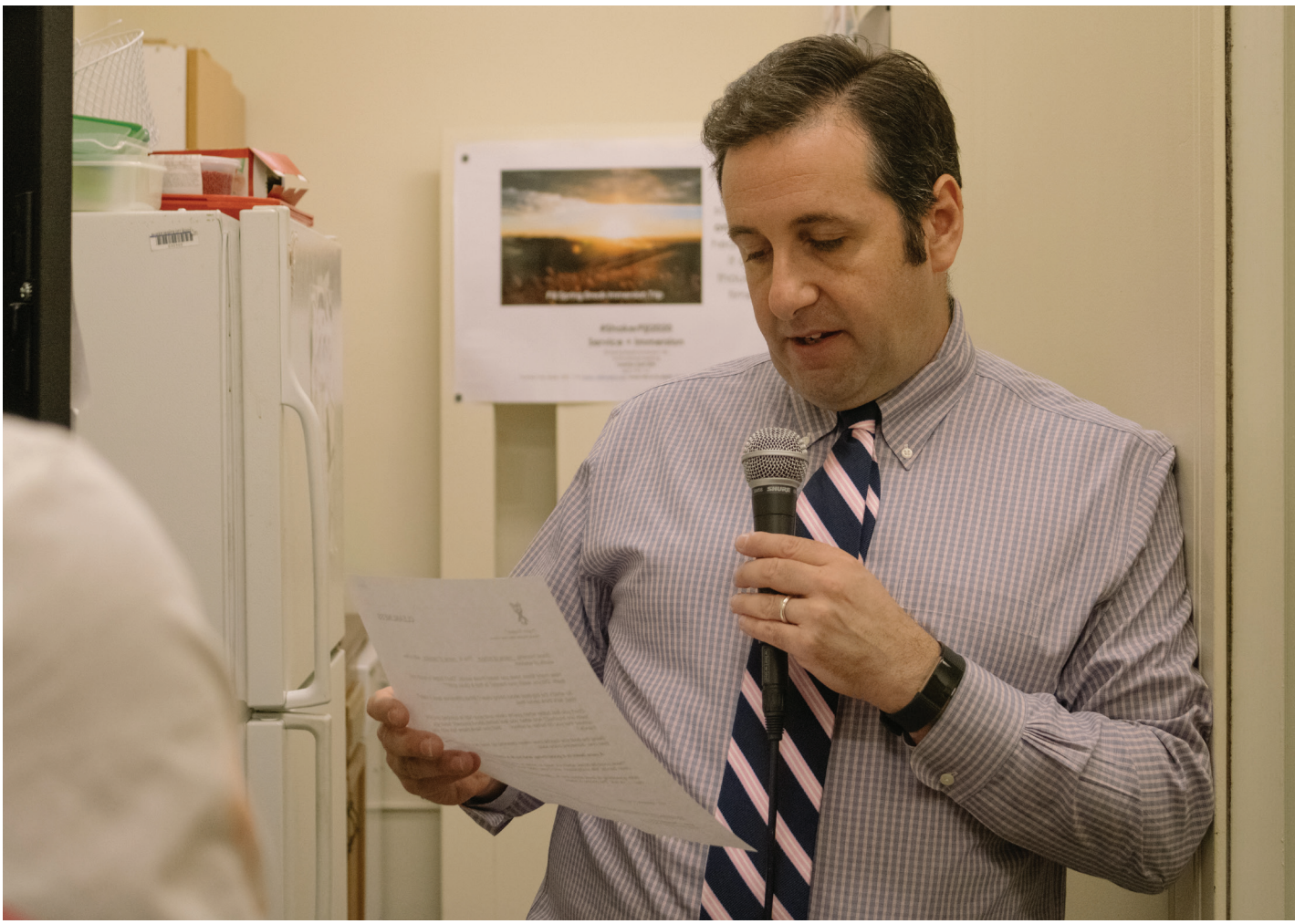
"I think it's important to be transparent with people," she said. "I know they can only open up to a certain extent, but it's [about] improving communication, and so people aren't left in the dark."

Days after Glasner assumed the role of substitute high school principal Nov. 2, he appeared on the Large Auditorium stage along with then-Interim Superintendent Dr. Stephen Wilkins and Scott Stephens, executive director of communications, during the community meeting.

The district convened the meeting to answer questions about the various personnel actions. The three answered audience questions submitted on notecards, but the audience grew frustrated and angry. People lined up at the stage to urge Stephens to ask their questions.

Eventually, some walked up on the stage, took the microphone from Glasner and began addressing the administration and audience.

The Board of Education released a statement Nov. 9 ac-



Juli gives "words of wisdom" on the announcements almost every day. His signature catchphrase, "Make it a great day, or not. The choice is yours," is a student favorite. **Photo by David Vahey.**

knowledging community frustrations and flaws in the meeting's format and promising to take action.

Glasner has worked in Shaker since 2014, serving as Shaker Heights Middle School principal from July 2014 to June 2018, executive director of curriculum and instruction starting July, 1 2018 and interim high school principal from Nov. 2, 2018 through June 2019.

Glasner said the meeting helped address the harm and tension in the community. "That meeting really underscored for me the importance of listening to our community, making sure we have strong structures and processes in place, to focus on teaching and learning," he said. "Honestly, I also think that a lot of the events of last year resulted, bluntly speaking, from a failure in leadership at many different levels."

He said he realized the value of good leaders, and that the district conducted an extensive search to find the person best fit for the high school principal job, which led them to Juli.

"I really believe that when we're hiring leaders today, we're hiring them because they have an opportunity to shape our school district for tomorrow," Glasner said.

Glasner is focusing on communication by reinstating the Superintendent Advisory Council, meeting with the Parent Teacher Organization Executive Committee and starting a teacher advisory group.

Glasner's two main focuses for the school year are school climate and black excellence.

The district has begun to implement structures and programs that align with these two catego-

Glasner addresses the Board Trustees of the Shaker Schools Foundation Oct. 17. **Photo by Mae Nagusky.**

ries. Social-emotional learning has been added to pre-kindergarten through eighth grade.

Glasner said, "The focus on school social-emotional learning skill development is one really concrete thing that we are doing to really improve our school climate and culture from prekindergarten through 12th grade," he said. "Because we know that having students feel comfortable and safe and having positive relationships with adults and with peers, really has a pretty direct correlation with academic achievement," Glasner said.

According to the Ohio Department of Education, "Social-emotional learning is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions."

Along with these programs, the 1:1 device initiative for grades 5-12 is underway.Glasner said he's excited to see where the integration of technology takes the classroom. "The 1:1 Chromebook initiative, it really allows us to provide targeted instructions, supports and enrichments in a way that we haven't been able to up until now," he said.

The most significant policy the district implemented is the equity policy. The BOE adopted this policy in spring 2019, and it asserts: Teaching students based on their academic needs results in educational equity; all students must participate in order to create a skill set for life; BOE decisions must be made justly and there will be a targeted, universal approach.

According to shaker.org, a targeted approach "sets universal goals for all students and identifies targeted means and processes for specific popula-

tions depending on how they are situated to opportunity. This approach recognizes that the District must respond with necessary resources and multiple paths needed for different school communities and students to thrive."

Glasner said equity training for the BOE and district leadership is crucial.

"I think one of the things that makes us unique is there always is a need to talk about equity in the district, and that I think has been true of our district since [its] inception, honestly," Glasner said

Glasner said that his work as SMS principal and SHHS interim principal is helping him in his new position. "One of the things coming into superintendent that was a priority and remains a priority is building relationships," he said. "I feel very fortunate that I started in this role having some really strong relationships in place. Many of our students, I've gone to see move from the middle school to the high school, and many of our students, as well as many of our administrators, teachers and community members."

Glasner continued, "I am still working on developing relationships every day and [it is a] really important part of my job and also creating structures that allow for relationships to be built across schools and within our community," he said. "But I feel very fortunate to have had the experience of being middle school and high school principal. It has served me well, and it will serve me well moving forward."

Stephens said he is already beginning to see change.

"It really has changed," Stephens said. "A lot of that seems like a year ago history right now, and that we've turned some kind of corner, too. People seem genuinely excited about the start of the school year and genuinely pleased about it."

Stephens continued, "Candidly, if they don't feel that way, they're really not telling us."

Junior Zoe Rosenfelt agreed that this year has been better thus far. "The tension that kind of built up last year was a lot of Shaker problems, like stuff that we as students didn't have control over, and I think the tension built up from that is what kind of made things so bad for the district," she said.

"But I think for this year," she continued, "the change in attitude about listening to students and listening to community members, because we're the ones who know what needs to change, because we're the ones impacted directly by it."

Glasner said he wants to listen and work with students, staff, parents and committee members to address their concerns. He explained that the district has to examine its policies and structures to fit the needs of all.

McNutt echoed this idea. "It's important to make amends, but I think in order to do that again, you have to maintain communication and acknowledge faults that exist," she said.

Glasner said the work is collaborative. "I really believe that we're all doing this work together," he said.

"It means we, as a community, are doing this work together. I really believe that that drives the way I approach this work, and the way we interact with everybody around here on a daily basis."

> "It's important to make amends, but I think in order to do that again, you have to maintain communication and acknowledge faults that exist."
>
> Nya McNutt
> *senior*

Bothered by the Buzz

Maurice Lewis and
Sy'Rai Bloodworth,
Journalism I Reporters

Students who eat lunch outdoors and go outside for physical education are attracting attention from stinging insects, whether they are bees, yellowjackets or wasps.

Freshman Rachel Jackson said that she has heard complaints about the bees in the lunchroom since school started.

Freshman Jada Stringer said that bees chase her when she runs track for gym and on the days she decides to eat lunch on the patio.

"When do they plan on fixing the problem?" Stringer said. "I'm tired of running."

A security guard who works in the cafeteria and did not want to be identified said that the problem reoccurs every spring. He said that in the past, maintenance staff has installed traps to try to catch the yellowjackets, but he was unsure if that practice continues.

High school nurse Paula Damm said that three students have come to her office this fall due to stings from what she believes are wasps.

Principal Eric Juli, who is new to the high school, said that he was unaware of the problem. However, he said he would talk to the head custodian to check out his options.

Assistant Director of Buildings and Grounds Sean Brown said the traps are usually placed around the football field every spring.

However, because the traps attract bees, custodians are reluctant to install them on the patio near the cafeteria.

To minimize the problem, Brown said, custodians empty the patio trash cans frequently.

Brown said this yearly problem will lessen as the temperature cools.

Fact:
Bees only sting once: but wasps sting repeatedly.

Fiction:
Wasps are not attracted to human food.

Fact:
One bee produces about one-twelfth of a teaspoon of honey in its lifetime.

Fiction:
Bees won't sting at night.

Fact:
Honey bees are the officaial insect of Maine.

Five of the 55 cars in the high school's front parking lot on Sept. 17 were parked without the necesary permit. **Photo by David Vahey.**

RESCUE!
YELLOWJACKET TRAP
Complete with attractant – just add water and hang
•Catches eight yellowjacket species
•No killing agents – insects drown
•Non-toxic mode of action against target pests
Trampa para avispas

Maintenance staff place yellowjacket traps, such as the one pictured, around the football field. **Photo by David Vahey.**

1 in 5 Cars Park Without Permit

Zara Braun and Nikolai Ewing,
Journalism I Reporters

About 20 percent of cars parked in four areas at the high school were parked illegally Sept. 19 because they did not display the required parking permit.

The required permit is only given to Shaker staff members and takes the form of a sticker that is usually placed on the staff member's windshield. Students are not given the stickers and may not park in any of the three building lots or the staff area designated on the oval. According to head of security Mark Seymore, the only way to get a parking sticker is to be a member of Shaker staff.

On Oct. 15, The Shakerite counted 334 parking spaces on the oval and in school parking lots.

The Shakerite did not determine whether cars parked illegally Sept. 19 belonged to students, substitute teachers, teachers whose cars are unmarked or visitors to the high school.

Students said lack of parking access may increase tardiness. "Most kids walk into school late because the parking is just so far, and then they have to walk," sophomore Carly Gimbel said. "and it gets even worse in the winter."

But students are not the only ones who struggle to find parking spaces. Staff members do too, despite having permits. An office employee who did not want to be identified said that the high school does not have enough parking spaces for staff. "It's terrible," the employee said, who knows staff members who walk to school because of the shortage of parking spaces.

Assistant Principal Sara Chengelis said that administrative discussions about parking policy do not happen "at the level I am involved."

Students Steadily Ignore Directional Staircases

Moira McGuan and Rebecca Smith,
Journalism I Reporters

Nearly 60 people were observed going the wrong way on the directional staircases on the second floor between fifth and sixth period Sept. 12.

The directional staircases are the only two in the high school in which students are supposed to travel either up or down, depending on the staircase. Eight other staircases go between the first and second floors and aren't labelled with specific directions, but the directional stairs are the only ones that go from the basement to the third floor.

Between periods, people are expected to follow the directions assigned to each staircase — and most do. Due to gridlock and crowding, the administration assigned directions to the two main stairways in 2002.

There is no mention of directional staircases in the student handbook. The designation is more of a practice than an official rule or policy. The stairs are sometimes monitored during transition periods, but there seems to be no real consequence for going the wrong way.

The Shakerite reported 59 students disregarding directions between fifth and sixth periods in a Dec. 21, 2018 story that addressed whether the new tardy policy was affecting students' decisions. Students interviewed this year said they go the wrong way for convenience more than anything. They also don't want to walk all the way to the other staircase and risk being late.

English teacher and Shaker Writing Center co-director Aimee Grey said that students should plan their routes through the school when they get their schedules to avoid confusion. Directional staircases are in place for a good reason, she said.

"Students who ignore that are being selfish and are disregarding their peers," Grey said.

Principal Eric Juli said he does not see a problem with students going the wrong direction. "It is important to have time to take a break, get a drink of water, or get to a locker."

Juli continued, "I don't see what [the directional staircases] gets us in the long run."

"I think that they were made with the intention of doing good," said Juli, "but have caused unintentional consequences."

Principal Eric Juli said that the up and down stairs originally had good intentions, "but have caused unintentional consequences." **Photo by David Vahey.**

It's Better to Bring Your Own

Bay Simonelli and Julia Loveman,
Journalism I Reporters

The nurse's office is the source of more than tissues and adhesive bandages — but only in a pinch.

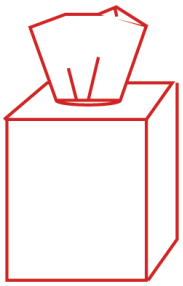
"My goal is that every person who has hygiene issues should have their own deodorant — should have their own this, should have their own that — in their locker," said high school nurse Paula Damm.

"If they don't, I carry deodorant, pads, tissues, contact lense solution and dental floss, and all those things. I carry them for an emergency if you don't have your own," Damm said.

By now, students have been asking teachers for tissues during class. Some teachers require students to bring tissues for mandatory or extra credit.

"Last year, my teacher had us bring them in," freshman Skyler Sokal said.

"I know one of my classes does [require bringing in tissues], and one of them doesn't, but other than that, I don't know," freshman Brian Fox said.

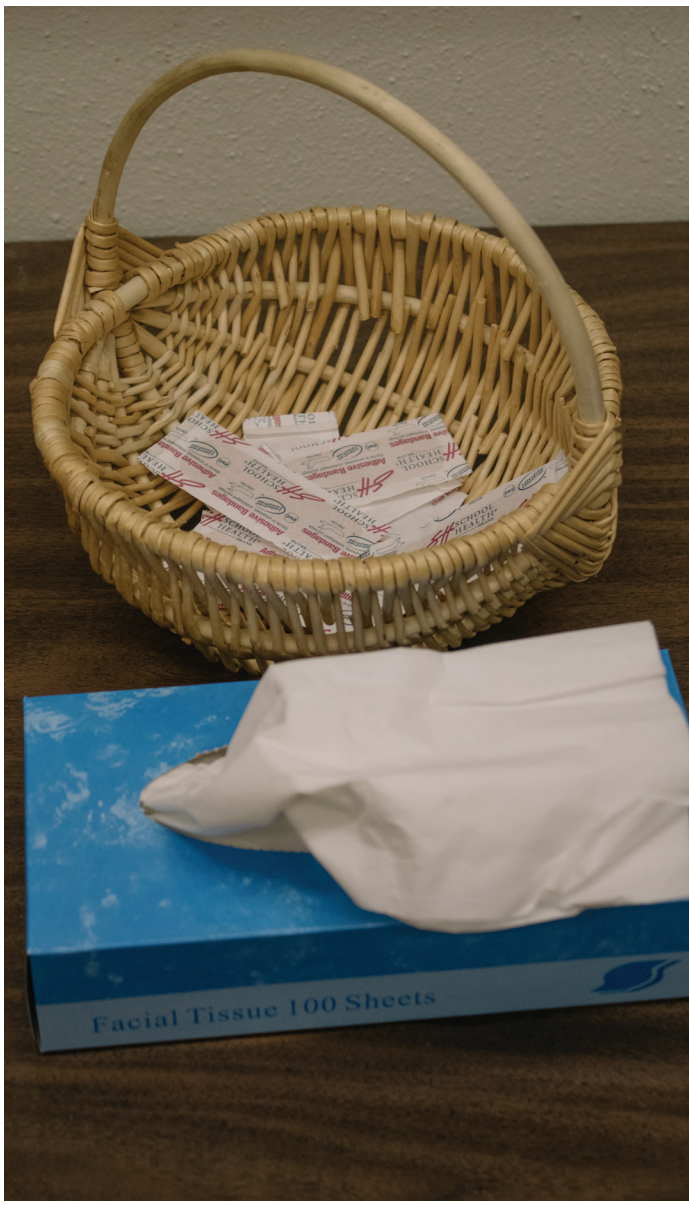


Under Ohio House Bill 410, students are not allowed to miss more than 65 hours or roughly 10 days, even with a valid doctor's excuse, so students sometimes come to school sick.

Although Damm said she doesn't have a strict budget to follow, she said she has encountered some issues with lack of resources for students who need them. "I've had times where I've had to go to Costco with somebody to get stuff because I've run out," she said.

Damm is preparing for the rest of this school year by purchasing enough adhesive bandages. "I think I ordered three boxes of 15,000 Band-Aids each, so that's 45,000 Band-Aids," she said.

Students can find the Health Office and



Sickness is common for students during the first few months of school, as the close contact easily spreads germs and viruses, such as the common cold or the flu, according to healthline. **Photo by David Vahey.**

Trump Targets Food Assistance

Cheyanne Thornton
and Chethan Chandra,
Journalism I Reporters

Students who receive free and reduced lunch benefits will not lose access now that the Trump Administration has reversed its proposal to cut $4.5 billion from a nutrition assistance program.

The Administration's proposed rule would have caused nearly 3 million people to lose access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, commonly known as SNAP. In addition, a second analysis from the Food and Nutrition Service estimated that almost 1 million children would lose automatic eligibility for free or reduced lunch. Forty-five percent of those children would still be eligible but they would have to apply for benefits instead of receiving them automatically. Fifty-five percent would lose access altogether.

This analysis presents concerns for the high school's student population, in which 34 percent of the students received free or reduced-price lunch during the 2016-17 school year.

A student who did not want to be identified told The Shakerite that she opposes Trump's proposed rule. "It's a very horrible idea," said the student, "the fact that he thinks it's OK to take away kids' lunches and breakfasts that they need."

"My family doesn't have as much income as an average American family," the student said. "Me not having the opportunity to eat lunch or breakfast when that can sometimes be my one meal of the day. When I go home it's just upsetting to know that I probably won't be able to eat anymore."

Another student said that as an athlete, these cuts would affect him significantly. "I won't have enough energy because sometimes my mom can't feed me. The fact that I

One student said that Trump's actions affect the nutrition they get. "I won't have enough energy because sometimes my mom can't feed me." **Photo illustration by David Vahey.**

won't be able to have enough energy to eat is just uncalled for," the student said.

The Trump administration's sudden reversal of its decision occurred after the public comments page for the proposed rule received nearly 130,000 responses, most of them opposing it.

In addition to this public backlash, Rep. Marcia L. Fudge, chair of the House Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition, Oversight, and Departmental Operations and representative for the 11th District of Ohio, opposed the rule.

"The proposed change to the Standard Utility Allowance is only the latest in a long list of planned cuts to critical assistance working families count on to provide for their basic necessities and put food on the table," Fudge said in a statement published on her web page. "Instead of declaring war on poverty, this president has declared war on our most vulnerable citizens."

The Greater Cleveland Food Bank also had concerns about how the proposed rule would affect Cuyahoga County. "SNAP is the largest nutrition assistance program in the United States," wrote Kimberly LoVano, the Director of Advocacy and Public Education at the food bank.

According to LoVano, the food bank provides benefits to nearly 200,000 people in Cuyahoga County, including 82,000 children. "If fewer people are eligible for SNAP or see a reduction in benefits due to these changes, we can expect more people turning to food pantries, hot meals, and other food programs to make ends meet," she stated.

LoVano spoke against the proposed cuts in Washington, D.C. Oct. 28 and 29.

According to LoVano, the food bank will continue to help families. "If these rules take effect, we will notify our community of the changes and continue to help connect them to benefits they are eligible for," she wrote. Families in need of assistance can reach the food bank's help center at (216) 738-2067.

In the face of the debate over SNAP's funding, the students interviewed want the energy to go through their day. Said the first student, "I didn't ask to not be fed because I don't have enough income coming into my family."

It's a Matter of Trust

Lillian Potiker, Evan Barragate and Karthik Chandra,
Journalism I Reporters

Five years after the death of Tamir Rice, feelings about the police reflect both gratitude and concern.

"In this community, I don't have a problem with the police," said freshman Rayne James, who is African-American.

Nov. 22 marked the five-year anniversary of the death of then 12-year-old Tamir Rice, who was shot by a Cleveland police officer while playing in a park. The shooting sparked a strong national reaction of outrage and demands for greater police accountability.

"These problems can be addressed," James said.

He continued, "What I see on TV is disturbing. I think they could spend more time training before they actually go on duty."

Have police shootings of unarmed African-American citizens around the country caused people to fear the police? Do African-American Shaker residents trust the local police and feel that their safety is ensured?

However, James expressed a favorable view of the police department in Shaker Heights. "It seems like they do a pretty good job handling what they do around the Shaker community," he said.

A Shaker police officer who asked not to be identified said residents express gratitude for the police. "They make a point to tell us how much they appreciate us," the officer said.

Junior and MAC Scholar Dalton Mosley has had a generally positive relationship with police officers. "I've met a few police officers in my life; they're usually kind to me, very respectful, very generous," he said. **Photo by Mae Nagusky.**

Shaker Heights Police officers responded to the high school's Nov. 22 lockdown. **Photo by Mae Nagusky.**

Dalton Mosley, a junior and MAC Scholar, said that despite widespread police violence against African-Americans, the police officers he has encountered do their jobs well.

"I've met a few police officers in my life; they're usually kind to me, very respectful, very generous," he said.

Mosley continued, "They care about the people." He said that he spoke on behalf of himself, not MAC Scholars.

Ranielle James, Rayne's mother, said she must tell her children that their race affects police interactions.

"In light of the different things that are published in the news, the talk is different now," she said. "Now you're looked at a certain way."

Ranielle's view reflects the idea that being black in America means you should never feel completely safe from police brutality, even in a diverse city like Shaker Heights She advises her children, "Lose the attitude; do exactly what they say."

IF 60 PAGES AREN'T ENOUGH . . .

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CHANGE, BY AGREEMENT OR DECREE

Caroline Brancato Investigations Editor

Cleveland has been at the center of a policing tactic debate for years, but now, due to intervention by the Department of Justice, the city is starting to see progress

Alona Miller

In the past decade, America's newsfeed has been flooded with stories of police brutality — and questions about lack of accountability officers usually face.

A 2015 Washington Post and Bowling Green State University analysis found that from 2005-2015, only 54 police officers across the country were charged for fatally shooting someone, despite thousands of such shootings during the same period. These shootings, sometimes documented by body cams or witnesses' smartphones, cause some people to fear the police.

Senior Grace Farrell recalled a time earlier this fall when she was in the car with her mother and was pulled over by a Shaker police officer. Farrell, who is African-American, said she thought during the incident, "Me and my mom are about to die in two seconds, and I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know how to get through any of this. I don't know if anyone's going to help us, or if this is going to be another situation where nobody is going to do anything about it."

Farrell said that everything turned out alright because they were only pulled over for a broken taillight. The officer was courteous, she said. But the situation was nerve-racking, she said, because she didn't know if she and her mom were being pulled over for a legitimate reason, or if it was because of her skin color.

In the past few years, stories of the violent deaths of young African-Americans, mostly men, at the hands of police have dominated the internet, incited protests and inspired the creation of social justice movements and organizations.

One of the most notable protests occurred in Ferguson, Mo. after a white police officer shot and killed Michael Brown Jr., an unarmed African-American teenager. Protests against police brutality ensued in Ferguson and turned violent as people looted businesses and destroyed buildings in August 2014. Police re-

sponded by firing tear gas, smoke bombs and rubber bullets.

Calls for accountability and reform are mounting. Campaign Zero is an organization committed to ending police violence and reforming policing policies. By examining police contracts, they aim to stop the incidents that caused Farrell to feel the way she did when she was pulled over.

To do this, the organization created six categories and used them to evaluate police contracts across the country for the ways that they limit police officer accountability.

The organization attempted to review the police contracts of the 100 largest U.S. cities. They were able to evaluate 81 contracts, including Cleveland's. Three of the 100 cities do not have police contracts, and the remaining 16 refused to send their contracts in for evaluation.

The first category is disqualifying misconduct complaints. For example, if someone submits a complaint about a police officer, provisions within the police contract may disqualify or invalidate the complaint if it is not submitted within a certain period of time after the incident occurred. Twenty-six of the 81 contracts Campaign Zero reviewed contained language that disqualified misconduct complaints.

The second category is restricting interrogations of police officers. For example, a contract may prevent a police officer from being interrogated within 48 hours after an incident occurs. This waiting period can prevent the entire story from being told, and it can decrease the effectiveness of an investigation.

Fifty police contracts Campaign Zero reviewed contained provisions that restricted interrogations.

Giving officers unfair access to information is the third category. Forty-one contracts Campaign Zero evaluated allow police officers to see information before they are interrogated about an incident. Civilian suspects do not have such access. In 16 cities, officers are allowed to review all of the evidence against them prior to the interrogation.

The fourth category is limiting discipline and oversight. A violation in this category can include preventing a police officer's past history of misconduct from being considered in a future investigation of them. Limiting oversight can also prevent the media from holding police officers accountable by preventing the release of information about an officer under investigation. This is the most common violation, found in 66 of the 81 contracts.

The fifth category is requiring the city to pay costs related to police misconduct. Violations under this category may require cities to give officers paid leave while under investigation, to pay legal fees related to their actions or to pay citizens when the police reach a settlement, the organization wrote. Campaign Zero found 41 contracts contained violations in this category.

The sixth category is erasing misconduct records. These vio-

> "I don't know if anyone's going to help us, or if this is going to be another situation where nobody is going to do anything about it."
>
> Grace Farrell
> *senior*

lations can include removing complaints from an officer's personnel file or erasing all records of misconduct after a certain period of time upon request. Forty-three cities' contracts contained violations in this category.

Out of the 81 contracts reviewed, 73 contained at least one of the six violations. The most common violation was limiting discipline and oversight, and the least common was disqualifying misconduct complaints.

"Police unions have used their influence to establish unfair protections for police officers in their contracts with local, state and federal government and in statewide Law Enforcement Officers' Bills of Rights. These provisions create one set of rules for police and another for civilians, and make it difficult for police chiefs or civilian oversight structures to punish police officers who are unfit to serve," the Campaign Zero website states.

Campaign Zero found that the Cleveland Division of Police contract contained violations in five categories. The only exception was requiring the city to pay for officer misconduct.

That means that if a Cleveland police officer is suspended during an investigation, the City of Cleveland is not required to pay the officer's salary.

Police contracts that include such language can limit how strictly police officers are held accountable for misconduct, including shootings. Such limits can, in turn, affect how a police department performs and is perceived within its community, according to Campaign Zero.

But Commander John Cole of the Shaker Heights Police Department does not think that contracts limit police accountability.

He said that a contract is used to ensure that a police department follows its own rules when disciplining or terminating an officer and that officers will always be held accountable for their actions.

¨I can't speak to anyone's intention," said Ayesha Bell Hardaway, an assistant professor of law at Case Western Reserve University Law School and a member of the Shaker Heights City Schools Board of Education. She continued, "I would imagine [police unions] have come up with things that they think will make their jobs less onerous or more friendly to their interests. And I think that is very much intentional, to create a document that is friendly, puts forth the interest of the union members," Hardaway said.

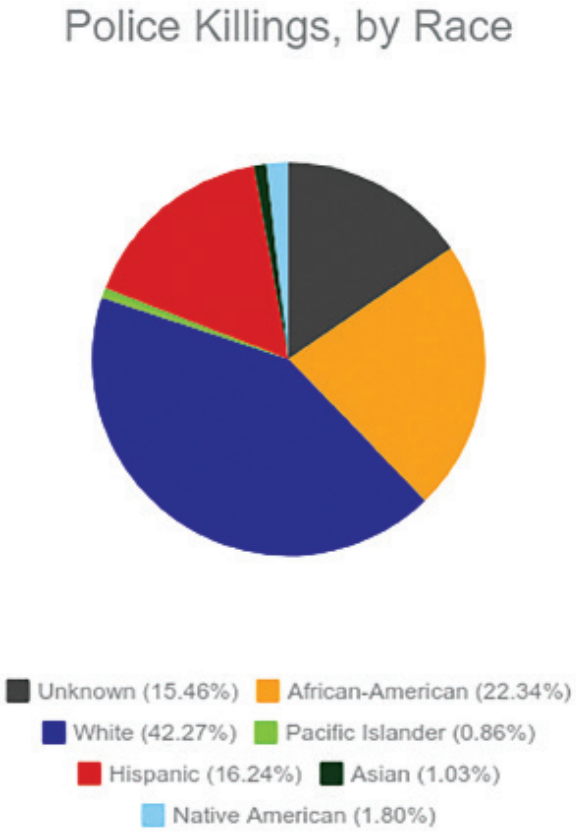
However, amending features of police contracts isn't an easy task because contracts are negotiated between the city that employs the police and the union that represents the police officers.

From the view of a police officer or a union representative, provisions that end up limiting accountability can be seen as ordinary contract features. Hardaway said that such limiting provisions exist within the contracts of many jurisdictions.

"Typically, when there's a provision in a contract, it doesn't just change. If the union contract spans for two years or three years, when it's up for renegotiation, there has to be some sort of impetus that would cause the city to want to change it," Hardaway said. Because of the nature of negotiations, Hardaway said, the city would have to give something up in order to remove or change a provision.

POLICE CONTRACT
Disqualifying Misconduct Complaints
Preventing Police Officers From Being Interrogated Immediately
Giving Officers Access To Information That Civilians Do Not Get
Limiting Disciplinary Consequences
Requiring Cities To Pay Costs Related To Police Misconduct
Preventing Information On Past Misconduct
10/25/19
Date
Information compiled by Campaign Zero
Ainsley Snyder

Further challenges in negotiating police contracts include the need to protect officers. "There's this balance, of course, between making sure that the officers have due process, but then being sure that there's the opportunity to explore other solutions that don't just serve to completely obstruct the accountability pro-



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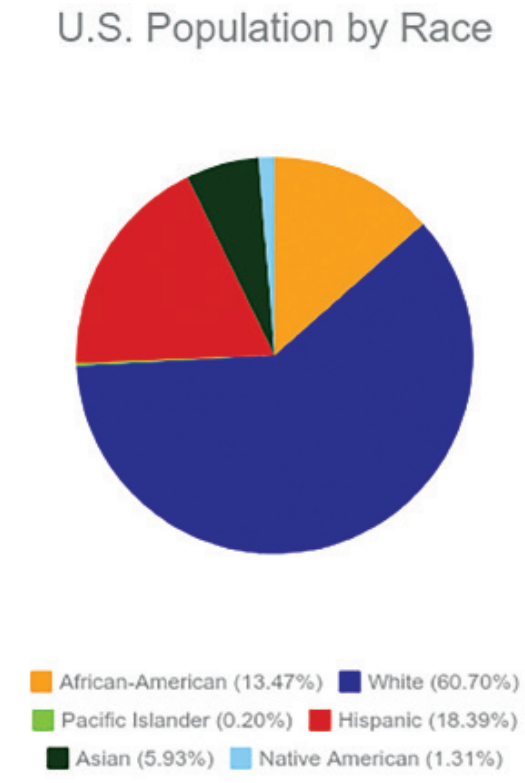

U.S. Government Census

cesses," Hardaway said.

When officers have due process, it means they are treated fairly when they are accused of wrongdoing. For example, if an officer is accused of excessive use of force, the claim will be investigated and the officer given a chance to explain their actions.

Cole said that union contracts help to protect police officers because they do not have the right to strike in Ohio. Contracts are beneficial, he said, because they outline the expectations between management and employees.

Although removing the limitations from police contracts can happen, it is unlikely that these provisions would ever be removed all at once through negotiation.

"In the context of reform efforts aimed at remedying a pattern or practice of unconstitutional policing, consent decrees have been viewed as the best way to provide numerous levels of support to struggling police departments, including in the revision of policies," Hardaway said.

Often at the request of an elected official, the U.S. Department of Justice will investigate a police department for unconstitutional policing, often leading to the adoption of a consent decree, which is an agreement to resolve a dispute between two parties. Investigations and the adoption of consent decrees have proven effective.

"One frequently cited success story is Seattle, where a 2012 consent decree has been credited with reducing unnecessary uses of force and improving citizens' trust in officers," The New York Times reported. Hardaway said that the Seattle police officers started to use body cameras because of the consent decree.

The DOJ investigated the Cleveland Division of Police and released its report Dec. 4, 2014, citing a pattern of "unreasonable and unnecessary use of force."

According to The New York Times, the DOJ began the investigation into CDP practices at the request of Cleveland Mayor Frank G. Jackson in 2013.

Jackson's request came after Cleveland police officers killed two unarmed African-Americans after their car backfired Nov. 29, 2012. Police mistook the sound for gun shots and began a 20-mile chase

Commander John Cole of the Shaker Heights Police Department said that police union contracts don't limit accountability. "The officer will always be held accountable for their actions," he wrote.
Photo by David Vahey.

that grew to involve 62 police cars. The chase ended when the civilians pulled into a parking lot and officers fired 137 rounds into their vehicle at close range, killing both passengers.

The DOJ investigation was announced two weeks after a white Cleveland police officer shot and killed Tamir Rice, a 12-year-old African-American boy, in a Cleveland park Nov. 22, 2014. Police had responded to a report of a man who was pointing a pistol at random people in a park. During the call to the police, the caller said that the gun was "probably fake" and that Rice was "probably a juvenile." The weapon was a realistic toy gun known as an AirSoft pistol.

Rice's death made national news as part of the increasing trend of unarmed African-American males killed by police.

Police officers killed 1,164 people across the country in 2018. African-American people were 38 percent of those killed by these 100 police departments, despite comprising only 21 percent of the population in their jurisdictions, according to Mapping Police Violence.

Instances such as Rice's death and the car chase led the NYT to deem the CDP "synonymous with the racially charged debate over police tactics" in a 2015 article.

The DOJ's report found that Cleveland police

officers used excessive force with firearms, tasers, chemical sprays and fists.

"The report also said the police had used excessive force against mentally ill people and employed tactics that escalated potentially nonviolent encounters into dangerous confrontations," according to the NYT.

Cleveland worked with the DOJ to address abuses found in the report and to create an improved division of police. This cooperation resulted in the creation of a consent decree.

"What is remarkable, though, about Cleveland and this agreement is that it reflects the decision of community members, law enforcement, leaders and city officials to do the difficult work that is required to address systemic issues that can undermine cooperation between police and large parts of the community, and thereby reduce public safety for all of us," said Vanita Gupta, former head of the DOJ's Civil Rights Division, May 26, 2015 at the announcement of the consent decree.

"With this agreement, the city and division of police agree to implement comprehensive reforms in the way that the CDP recruits, selects, guides, trains, supervises, investigates and disciplines officers to ensure that officers are practicing constitutional, community-oriented policing, and that those officers who fall short of that standard are held accountable," Gupta said.

Agreements made in the consent decree are based on reforming policing practices. The consent decree requires that the CDP create plans that reform staffing, recruitment and develop a community and problem-oriented policing plan.

"There's this balance, of course, between making sure that the officers have due process, but then being sure that there's the opportunity to explore other solutions that don't just serve to completely obstruct the accountability processes."

Ayesha Bell-Hardaway
CWRU
assistant
professor of law and
Shaker BOE member

The CDP agreed to document every time an officer unholsters their gun, and supervisors are now required to investigate instances of excessive force the same way that crimes are investigated.

Cleveland police officers, abiding by the consent decree, are prohibited from using force in response to someone talking back or running away. Pistol whipping and firing warning shots are also prohibited in the agreement, according to the NYT.

Officers are now required to self-report instances of excessive force, and the officers' personal reports are compared to internal reports that record every time a stun gun is used.

The new agreement prohibits shooting from moving cars, a guideline that policing specialists have called for across the country, and has proven effective, according to the NYT.

When the New York Police Department put this rule into place in 1972, the number of people killed by police dropped by 37 percent, and half as many officers were killed in the line of duty, according to The Guardian. "Between 1972 and 2010, the number of incidents each year involving an NYPD officer firing his or her gun dropped from 944 to 92," The Guardian wrote.

The consent decree also es-

tablished the Cleveland Police Monitoring Team, which plays the roles of arbitrator, adviser and facilitator in monitoring how the CDP implements the agreement and how this implementation results in effective and constitutional policing.

"This means that the Monitor reviews, provides feedback on, and ultimately recommends approval or disapproval to the court of changes in policy, training, procedure, and other practices within the Division of Police," according to the Monitoring Team.

Hardaway is a member of the team. "We're just considered subject-matter experts who serve as agents of the federal court to work with the [DOJ] and the local government, in this case the City of Cleveland, to work through the implementation of the consent decree terms."

Hardaway said that the monitor has had no direct role in negotiations of Cleveland's police contract.

The consent decree also created the Cleveland Community Police Commission. Choir teacher Mario Clopton-Zymler is a member. "The Commission is a group of 10 civilian community members and three police representatives from the three police organizations in Cleveland. The commission civilians and police officers have a great working relationship. We work on policy changes and leverage our community connections to bring feedback into the reform process," Clopton-Zymler said.

When the commission was announced in May 2015, Clopton-Zymler applied and was sworn in September of that year. He said he was inspired to get involved after Rice was killed.

"He was 12 years old, and at the time I was teaching middle school students his age. I couldn't imagine what it was like to have experienced one of your students being killed so tragically," Clopton-Zymler said.

The City of Cleveland has not yet completed all of the reforms mandated by the consent decree, but the city has seen improvements. "A report this summer on Cleveland's continuing reforms cited a nearly 40 percent drop in officers' use of force from the previous year," according to the New York Times.

"The work of achieving bias-free community problem-oriented policing is ever changing, and ongoing," Clopton-Zymler said. "I can say in Cleveland, through the reforms required by the consent decree that the division of police continues to make progress in those two areas of police policy with recommendations from the commission on both bias-free policing and community problem-oriented policing."

The Shaker Heights Police contract includes one of the provisions Campaign Zero evaluated. "Oral and written reprimands shall, upon written request to the Chief of Police, be removed from the employee's personnel file after a retention period of three years.

Any Internal Affairs investigations that do not result in a 'sus-

> "I couldn't imagine what it was like to have experienced one of your students being killed so tragically."
>
> Mario Clopton-Zymler
> *choir teacher and Cleveland Community Police Commission member*

Listen to a conversation with the reporter who wrote this story in our podcast, **The Shake.**

tained' finding will not be placed in the affected employee's personnel file," the contract states. This language falls into the fourth category of limiting discipline and oversight.

"The reason that's problematic is because it prevents the mapping of patterns of engagement of particular officers in certain geographical locations of a city with certain demographics of people," Kevin LaMonica ('19) said.

But Cole stated that police union contracts do not limit accountability. In the case of the provision that allows the removal of reprimands, "the benefit to the officer could be that those complaints that are not sustained after investigation would not be in their personnel file for review by another potential employer and/or otherwise limit the officer's ability to be promoted. The time frame benefits the officer through the removal of negative writings in their personnel files," Cole wrote.

Even though the Shaker contract contains this provision, Farrell said that she feels comfortable around Shaker police officers because she saw them work in Safety Town, an educational program for children that teaches safety awareness.

"I feel like when I step out in the real world, it will be a little different because I feel [police officers] kind of have a bias towards black people," Farrell said. "But in Shaker, I'm fine because I know some of them, and I know that they have good intentions."

LaMonica, who was a CORE leader in the Student Group on Race Relations, attends Johns Hopkins University and is passionate about social justice.

He said that he knows a lot of people who are concerned about racial justice and reducing police brutality and that he thinks being aware of the impact of police union contracts is important.

"I just think regardless of where you are or what your community looks like, officers should be held accountable because they aren't above the law," he said.

He continued, "Shaker is kind of known for being on the forefront of race relations. There's like three documentaries about Shaker integrating in the '60s and '70s. SGORR made national headlines for being one of the first student organizations of its time in the country that really focused on bridging divides based on race.

So who's to say Shaker can't be in the forefront of creating fair police policies?"

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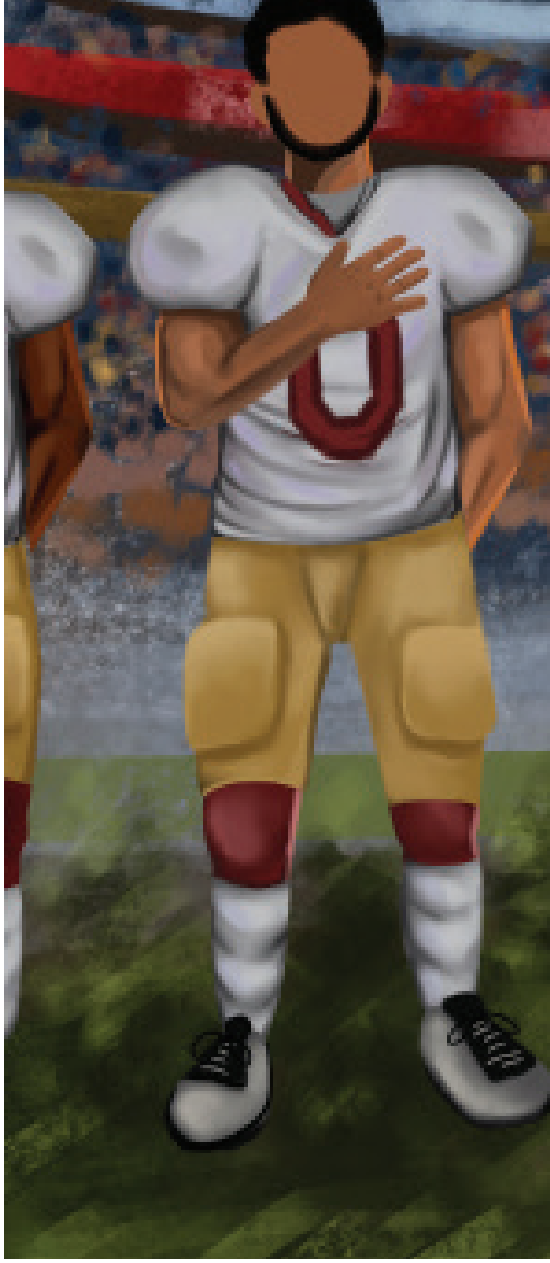
We Can Do More

Political movements should be commitments, not trends

Olivia Warren Opinion Editor



Activists in the United States are fighting to keep bigotry from defining our nation. Time and time again, in dire necessity, we fight back with advocacy and justice in order to remain the land of the free.

Bigotry has lead our nation too many times. Systematic racism in America remains a given, stemming from our horrific and inerasable past. But on Aug. 14, 2016, National Football League player Colin Kaepernick embodied the spirit of revolution in the United States: He knelt during the National Anthem. He risked all the effort that brought him into the NFL in order to shed light on police brutality.

By kneeling, he took a stand for all victims of systematic racism. This symbolic moment snowballed into a movement. Throughout our nation, people — from professional athletes to high school students — knelt in solidarity with all those affected by systematic racism and police brutality.

Though this protest elevated awareness, adequate, revolutionary change has not followed. Our government allows African Americans to be arrested two and a half times the rate of white people. The judicial system favors police officers over innocent, unarmed citizens. Under suspicion for selling loose cigarettes, Eric Garner was held down despite saying, "I can't breathe" 11 times, and the New York City police officer who killed him was not indicted. His story is what Kaepernick took a stand for. The scars of America's racist past have not faded despite the aims of people like Kaepernick.

Racial injustice prevails in America, and yet, the more sporting events I attend, the less I see people kneel.

Participating in a protest is a personal decision, and many who align themselves with the movement against systemic racism do not kneel. That's not the problem. The problem is that people who knelt after Kaepernick did, who pledged to fight against systematic racism with this symbolic act, have forgotten about the cause and moved on to participating in the next popular political trend.

Shaker Heights is known for being a liberal community, one that is open to discussion and promoting progress. Few consequences met students who knelt

Alona Miller

for the National Anthem beginning in the fall of 2017. Students did not fear repercussions when they walked out to promote gun control on March 14, 2017 and stood with the victims of the Parkland school shooting, which had occurred one month before. For the most part, Shaker accepts all cultures and fights against harmful stigmas. Still, the causes Shaker supports come and go.

I can't say that I'm the perfect example of turning a fad into a dedicated cause. Almost two years ago, following the Parkland shooting, my friend and I began a website to promote common-sense gun control. We had our own table at the March For Our Lives protest in 2018 in downtown Cleveland and passed out flyers to spread awareness for gun control. About 200 people joined our email list. At first, we constantly sent out reminders, news and ways to continue activism for sensible gun legislation. As the months passed, our emails dwindled. Soon they stopped. Only recently, sparked by national tragedy for the umpteenth time, we updated our website with current facts and continued our efforts.

But what has happened between the Parkland shooting and now? Gun legislation has not made it past the Senate and into law. More and more people have died from gun violence.

This column is not intended to shame and criticize those who have let these movements drift to the back of their minds. It's a reminder to tear away the cobwebs from these important ideas and remember that protests aren't trends, they're commitments.

By posting on your Instagram story every time tragedy strikes, which in recent years has been too often, you are raising awareness and aligning yourself with the resistance. But too often, a singular post is the extent of people's reactions. While I appreciate every single post, we need to do more.

For example, reproductive rights has been relevant to recent state legislation. Though abortion was ruled legal in 1971 in the Supreme Court case Roe v. Wade, more than 20 states, including Ohio, have taken steps to strip this right from women. Ohio's "Heartbeat Bill" regulates abortions so they are illegal after a fetal heartbeat is detected (at about six weeks), a point at which many women do not yet know they are pregnant. The irony of this bill is that the heartbeat detected at six weeks is not a real heartbeat, but a pulse cre-

Protestors call for gun control at the March for Our Lives in downtown Cleveland March 24, 2018. **Photo by Mae Nagusky.**

ated by electrical activity of the premature cells. When this bill came into light, it was disputed all over social media, and the immediate and passionate response of equality and personal stories was inspiring. In July, the bill was blocked by a federal judge.

But this threat to reproductive rights is not over.

According to Legislative Tracker, new abortion bills are coming up in Alaska, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri and Pennsylvania.

Even for those who don't live in one of these states or others where such laws have been in the works for years, the point of passing them is to move them up to the federal level, through court challenges, where they would affect every person in America. Anti-choice laws are not a trend. Our fight against them shouldn't be, either.

Signing petitions at the Planned Parenthood website, keeping up to date on the latest abortion bills and calling your legislators are all ways to get involved that won't upend your daily life.

Protests are not trends; they determine the future of our nation. Being politically active has become a way of socializing, but truthfully, it is a dedication that requires time and passion. In a community privileged with the resources of Shaker Heights, we all can afford to take advantage of the diverse clubs and organizations available to us. Not enough of us try.

Whether you join Take Action, the Gender and Sexuality Alliance, Environmental Club, or other student groups dedicated to change, you have the opportunity to make a difference within the high school or beyond.

When the massacre in Sudan occurred, and the government blocked the populace from social media, I saw many of my Instagram followers change their profile pictures to a soft blue to demonstrate their solidarity with the victims in Sudan.

While I followed this trend, I kept up on the news of Sudan and donated some of my own money through the International Rescue Committee, a non-governmental organization that engages in humanitarian endeavors across the globe.

Not everyone may be able to donate to the causes they are passionate about, but there are other ways to promote your cause: Keep up discussions to educate people about why your causes should matter to them, follow current events and be an educated citizen and voter.

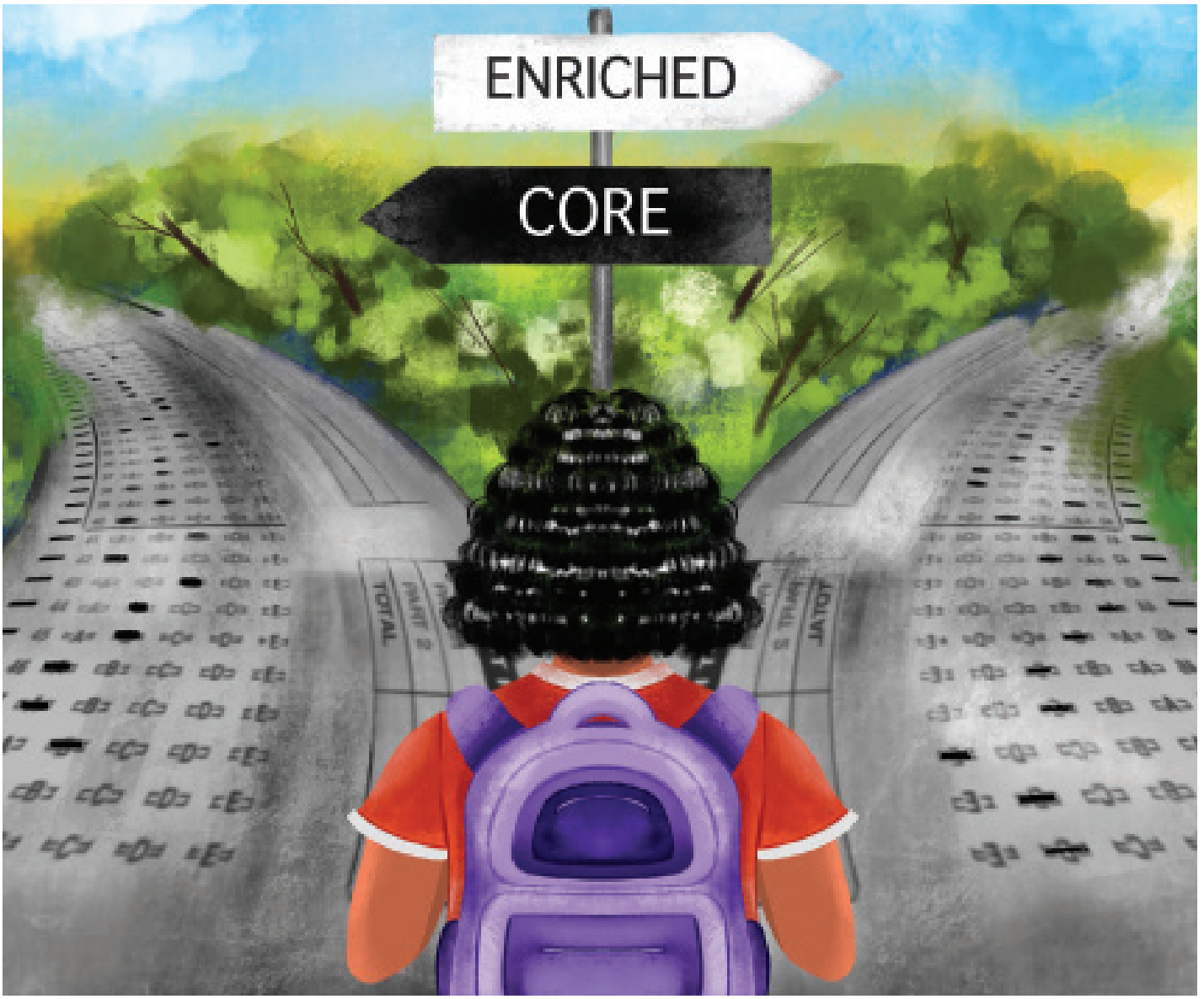
You don't need to run for Congress or donate your savings, but make sure that the candidates you vote for align with your passions, and that they are not part of a trend, but a movement.

We need to keep our spirits up. Those 10 seconds a day you use to spread awareness through a text or a tweet can be more. Turn that passion into a commitment — that is how we create change.

When you take a stand, stay standing.

TRACKING, AN UNFAIR RACE

Over time, class placement can affect the experience Shaker students of color face compared to their white peers



Olivia Peebles Education Columnist

Illustration by Alona Miller

When I was in fifth grade, I was not in Enriched Math 5. I was just in Math 5. I noticed a difference between students in my class and the higher-level class: our skin colors. My lower-level class comprised black and minority students, while nearly all of the white students were in the enriched-level class. Today, 66 years after the Brown v. Board of Education ruling, Shaker classrooms still appear segregated.

Dr. David Glasner, superintendent, visited a district elementary school and saw a class that appeared very similar to my fifth grade math class. Glasner, along with a few colleagues, asked a black student what they thought of the classroom demographics. The student responded, "Well, all the white students are in the enriched class."

Students from elementary to high school notice segregation in their classes, yet no one talks about how the classes became so divided in the first place. Students think separation is just the way it is.

But this segregation isn't a pure coincidence. This segregation stems from an old, insidious practice called tracking.

Upon entering fifth grade, Shaker students encounter significant changes as they leave their elementary schools for Woodbury Elementary. They walk into a strange school and meet new people, navigate the hallways by themselves and learn to play musical instruments.

They are also placed on academic tracks that have the power to make or break their school careers; the classes they are assigned by fifth grade have the power to determine what classes they take through the rest of their Shaker educations.

Tracking is an educational practice that separates students into course levels and long-term paths. Tracks divide academic subjects into levels to which students are assigned based on their academic ability. The district recommends students to tracks according to a combination of teacher recommendations and standardized test scores. This separation begins in the fifth grade, and these academic tracks can create long-term paths for students.

In a 1988 New York Times opinion piece, Sandra Salmans wrote, "In one form or another, ability grouping has been in use in American schools since the late 1800's. It was a response to the arrival of large numbers of ethnically and culturally diverse immigrants."

Tracking was originally designed to ensure that students take classes that challenge them and have access to personalized instruction from teachers. It's intended to allow students to learn at their own pace and level and reduce chances of falling behind or losing interest in a course.

A less recognized part of tracking is ability grouping, a form of tracking within a class. It begins as students first learn to read and learn basic arithmetic but is most prominent in third and fourth grades.

For example, teachers divide students into groups according to reading skills. "In English class, there's the high readers, the medium readers and the low readers. That can still be a form of tracking that isn't discussed as much, but is just as much a part of the conversation," Glasner said.

Dr. Erin Herbruck, director of primary education, said students are grouped based on their similar strengths and academic attributes. "They work together and grow together," she said.

Students are placed in these groups after observations are made by teachers. According to Herbruck, teachers identify students in their classrooms who show enriched-level skills in those courses. Then, teachers assign students to ability groups, considering the open-enrollment policy only applies to fifth grade and on. Ability grouping works by a push-in model, meaning enrichment teachers come into the classrooms in third and fourth grade instead of students leaving, as they did in the past. The enrichment teachers teach and support grade-level teachers with the whole class and small groups.

In theory, ability grouping in districts such as Shaker, one with a wide variety of academic strengths and weaknesses, is necessary and makes sense. It allows a teacher to focus instruction to meet students' needs by working in smaller groups. But Herbruck said there is also a need for more heterogeneous groups that feature

diversity in previous academic achievement as well as race and gender. Students can help one another grow and learn from one another's mistakes. Yet, a concern with heterogeneous groups is the different instructional paces diverse students need.

Ability grouping can possibly set students back from the level of achievement they could eventually reach. Skills such as multiplication and division are introduced in third grade, skills that will never go away. They are the basis of every other math class, as well as the tests in a student's future.

Teaching with ability groups sets up different levels of skill sets, expectations and motivation before students are placed onto tracks. Therefore, low-and average-level students deserve to face the same expectations and receive the same motivation as their enriched-level peers before they're placed onto tracks.

From third to fifth grade, I was in the average-ability math group. I felt discouraged and lesser than my enriched-level peers. Despite performing at an enriched level by sixth grade, I always doubted my skills as I participated class with students who had already been on this track, and I still do. The message the district is sending to 9 year olds in lower ability groups can be demoralizing.

Senior Adaeze Okoye agrees that dividing students into ability groups in elementary school creates lasting, negative effects. "It seemed like there was this pedestal you were put on if you got to go to the high group, when I was in the third and fourth grade, instead of sitting in the normal class. And there's students who think, 'Oh I'm not as smart as them, so I'm just not going to try anymore' or 'I don't even care anymore and that mind set follows them into high school," she said.

Alona Miller

In addition to the long-term effects of ability grouping, the standardized tests Shaker relies on for tracking can harm minority students.

In fourth grade, students take the Measures of Academic Progress test in the beginning, middle and at the end of the year. According to shaker.org, "The program instantly analyzes the student's response to each test question and, based on how well the student has answered all previous questions, selects a question of appropriate difficulty to display next." The purpose of the test is to measure

growth in performance over time, but the district uses it as a recommendation for class placement.

But the National Academies Press explains that standardized tests, such as the MAP in Shaker's case, are used to measure a student's ability to move forward. More importantly, they cause "profound implications for the development and future life chances of young people."

Unfortunately, black and white students confront these tests with inequitable knowledge and experience. According to Brookings, a nonprofit public policy group, this inequity is considered the school readiness gap: the difference in school readiness between black and white students in terms of math, reading and behavior.

The school readiness gap is caused by differences in socioeconomic status. The American Psychological Association explains that a lower socioeconomic status early in childhood leads to a slower development of academic skills such as memory, cognitive development and language, due to a lack of resources.

In 2017, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, 15.7 percent of black families in Shaker were considered low socioeconomic status, while only four percent of white families were in that category. According to a 2018 ProPublica analysis of data from the U.S. Department of Education, 41 percent of Shaker students receive free or reduced lunch.

This difference eventually leads to a racial disparity in class placement, as students of lower socioeconomic status continuously receive fewer opportunities and resources for learning.

Due to the school readiness gap, students of color usually don't get the same access to education and opportunities as their higher-performing and, typically, white peers.

Listen to a conversation with the columnist who wrote this story in our podcast, **The Shake.**

A student's performance and test scores in a course don't go away as a student moves on to the next year, but begin to define the path they will follow. Due to the school readiness gap, students of color usually don't get the same access to education and opportunities as their higher-performing and, typically, white peers.

Some 10 year olds recognize course levels and the way they correlate with skin color, and the district understands the future impact of the MAP tests. But not all 10 year olds grasp how the standardized test they are taking today can affect the rest of their high school educations.

As students head into fifth grade, they receive mail about course level recommendations.

Students and their families are informed of placement guidelines, considerations for enriched courses and where they are recommended to be placed. These recommendations are based on their performance in the course in fourth grade as well as test scores. For example, a student recommended for Enriched Math 5 may have scored 233 on the MAP math test, 218 on the MAP reading test and performed well in fourth grade.

These recommendations are not permanent placements. The district has employed an open

enrollment policy since at least 1985. Although Shaker has followed the policy for more than 30 years, Guidance Department Chairman David Peterjohn said that it has been more publicized in the last five to six years. This policy allows families from fifth grade on to place their students where they want and feel they are the best fit, regardless of the school's recommendation.

"Nothing can keep a student out of a course if a parent just says, 'This is what I want for my child,' " Woodbury Principal Danny Young said.

After these decisions are made, students build knowledge and skills that will carry onto the next year. According to the 2017-2019 Academic Planning Guide, "Students are encouraged to pursue the highest level of instruction matching their motivation, interest, and previous learning."

While the open enrollment policy gives students flexibility in courses they're allowed to take, we need to recognize that what a student learns and masters one year follows them to the next. This starts as early as third grade, when ability grouping begins.

Open enrollment would seem to mitigate the ongoing effects of tracking. But, there are de facto prerequisites for some courses. The district does not use the term prerequisite, but according to Peterjohn, "There's certain classes you have to take to have the foundations for others."

"We aren't going to turn people away from taking other classes, but obviously you have to do Algebra 1 and Algebra 2 before you do Pre-calc," Peterjohn said.

Despite our district's open enrollment policy, the longer you are on a track, the harder it is to break away from it and take advantage of this policy. Therefore, it's important for families to be involved in their children's educations before it's too late. It is not a fourth grader's place to understand the long-term importance of tests and placement. This means a student's family and background are just as much of a part of their education as is the student.

According to the APA, parents of lower socioeconomic status can struggle to balance the roles that come along with family and work, and thus may be less involved in their children's educations. These families tend to be less familiar and comfortable with the district and their amount of control over their student's education.

Parents must do more than motivate and set expectations for their children. The ability to understand the way our district works is crucial. But not all families have the time to develop or acquire the skills and relationships necessary to understand our district. With time and resources, such as parent relationships, teacher relationships, or experience in navigating school systems, parents can understand how to use the district to their child's advantage.

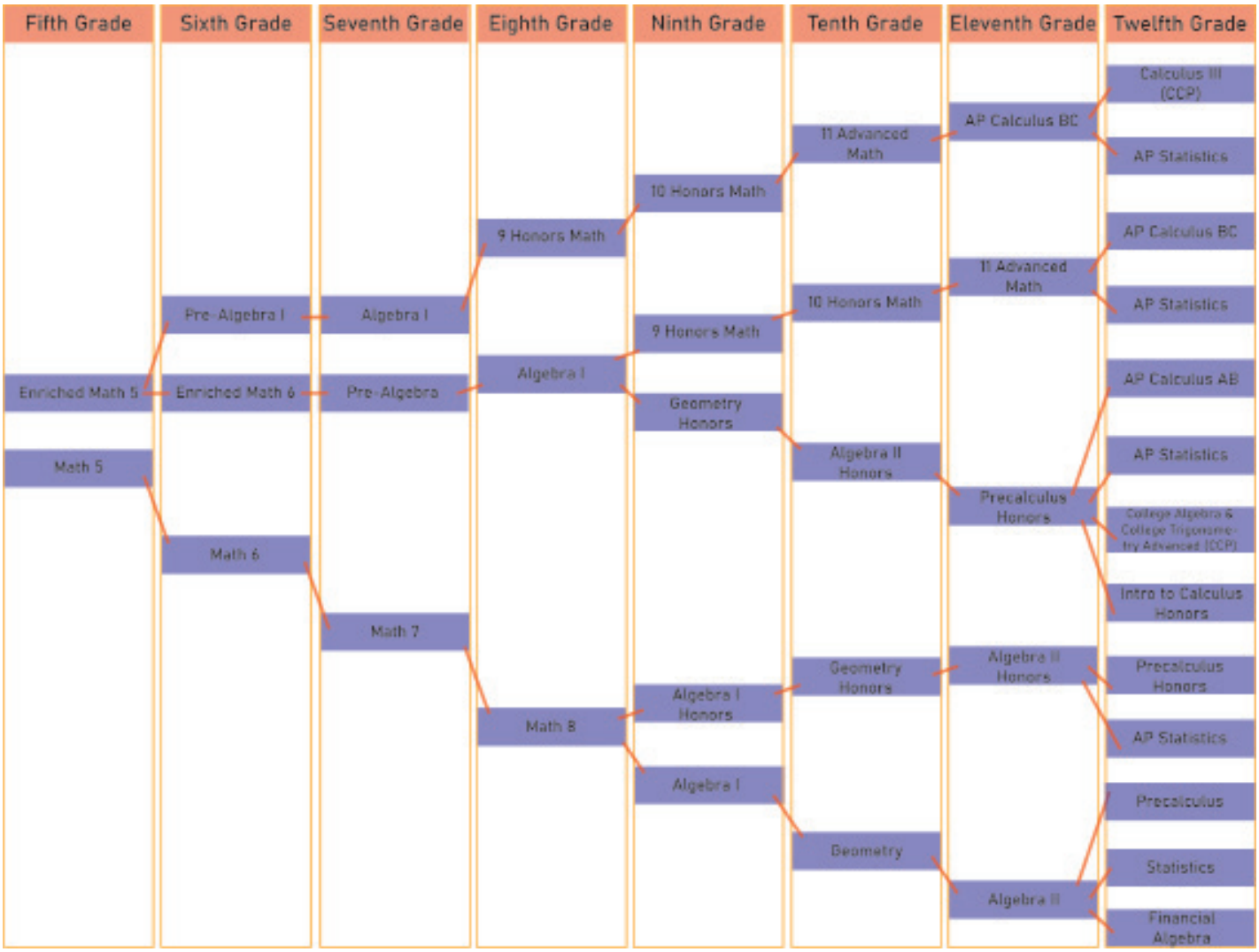
It's time to start implementing solutions and not just talking about them.

Considering the disproportionate effect of tracking on minority students, it's important that parents of all demographics and the administration work together to guarantee that Shaker students are getting the best education possible. Students who lack support as they progress through the district can accumulate negative effects in course placement and academic performance.

The administration and community have acknowledged disparities brought about by tracking through programs such as the Family and Community Engagement Office and CommUnity Builders. While these programs bring up the discussion of the inequities in our district, that's not enough.

It's time to start implementing solutions and not just talking about them.

Public schools around the nation are drop-



The tracks students follow are determined by their previous learning. A track can prepare a student for some future classes, but not for others. **Infographic by Ainsley Snyder.**

ping their tracking systems to work toward long-term, equal achievement between black and white students. In 2002, school districts such as Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland began to detrack their systems. This district eliminated its lower and advanced tracks to create diverse classrooms with mixed levels of achievement.

The Montgomery County Public School system comprises students of similar demographics to Shaker's. In 2002, minority students made up 51 percent of the Montgomery district. These students face the same barriers and feelings minority students in Shaker feel. The Montgomery County Education Forum explains the need for detracking as a way to address the fact that their county afforded "upper- and middle-class white and Asian children a better education than African American, Latino, Native American, special education, and less economically advantaged children." It wasn't even two years later, however, when they had to address the inequitable education minorities receive again. So, while detracking was a great step toward inclusivity and diversity in classes, it is still not a complete solution.

I do not believe that students in Shaker would thrive without the range of course levels to choose from. It makes sense for Shaker to keep the option of letting families and students pick a pace that works for them. But if the tracking system remains, more effective measures need to be taken to prepare black students equally.

The education a child receives as young as 3 or

4 years old will be more impactful than any program Shaker currently has to offer. We can achieve a more equitable education through universal preschool.

Offering pre-kindergarten education to Shaker families who otherwise would not have it would start to close the school readiness gap, or at least lessen its hindering effects. Universal public preschool would provide minority students with the earlier exposure to the knowledge and skills they will eventually be tested on.

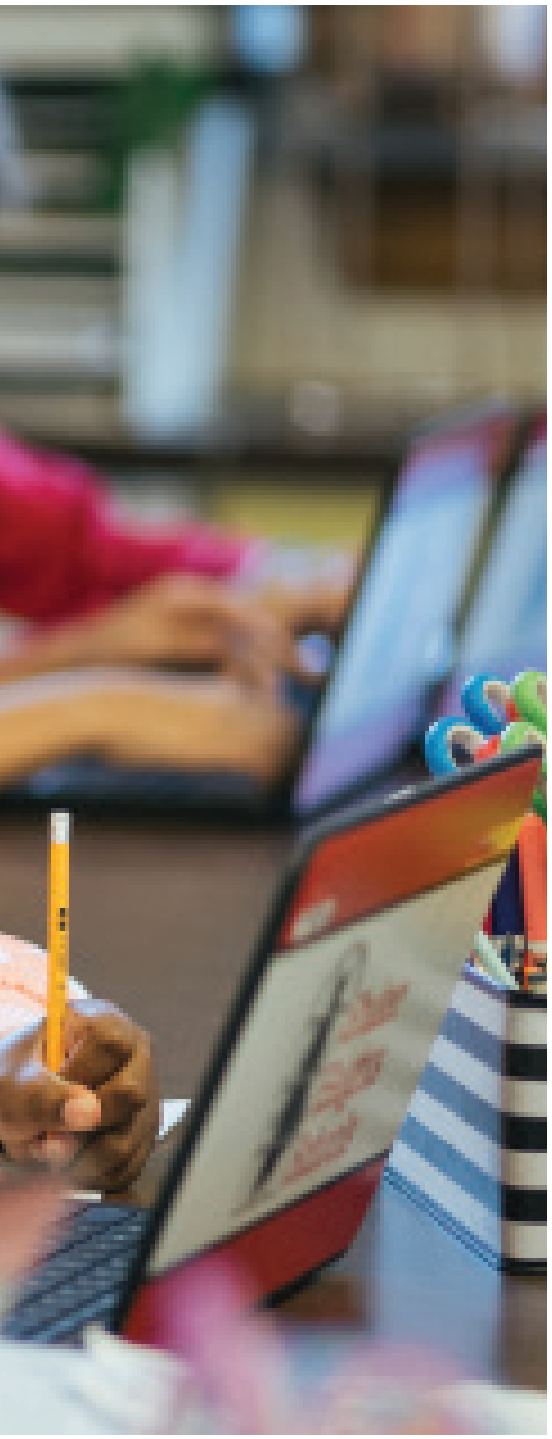
The district currently offers preschool at Onaway and Mercer elementary schools, which each accomadate 16 students, according to shaker.org. While the Fernway fire was a tragic event for this community, it doesn't have to be. The elementary school building could be used as a preschool. If Shaker had the opportunity to provide universal preschool, students could develop the emotional, social and academic skills that form the foundation needed to excel from kindergarten and on.

Of course, there is no telling when Shaker will be capable of offering universal public preschool -- if ever. It would be expensive and require extensive planning that I don't see possible in the near future.

Realistically, we cannot fix the inequities caused by tracking, but instead ameliorate them.

Instead of long-term actions, we should focus on what we as students and a community can handle. Smaller actions that can create change without years of planning are the best way to approach inequity brought about by tracking.

There are actions our parents and community members can take, but it would require participation from parents across races and socioeconomic statuses. We cannot expect much change to come if black and white families aren't collaborating. Shaker parents need to break the boundaries within the Shaker bubble and strive for the common goal



A student completes an assignment with her Chromebook in an Onaway Elementary School classroom. **Photo by David Vahey.**

of unity and equity. They should also want all parents to be included and have the same experience in our district.

Having more parents form new relationships across communities will have a positive effect on the district. I have watched my parents help other black families get involved and understand our district, as other parents did for them in the past. If more parents worked to amend the disproportionate amount of black families compared to white families involved in our community programs, such as the school board or PTO, we would be closer to the goal of equitable education. It's as easy as reaching out of our comfort zone and forming an informal network across the diverse communities in Shaker.

The same goes for us as students. We need to reach out of our comfort zones in and outside of class.

It is now five years after my first observation of almost segregated classes, and I sit in higher level classes. I see the same differences between the demographics of the higher-and lower-level classes, but I notice other things as well. It's not just race that creates differences in a class, it's the experiences that black students face, too.

The experience that a black student faces in Shaker is at times uneasy and challenging for reasons aside from the curriculum. I have heard black students discuss the isolation and awkward feeling of being one of the few students of their race in a class.

Black students recognize these differences more than their peers do, but they should not be the only ones who want to change this feeling.

Black and white students, along with their parents, need to reach out to each other. We should all want everyone to succeed and achieve as best they can. Smaller actions will be a great step toward breaking social barriers that divide minority and white students. Actions as small as white students including more black students in their group chats or study groups.

It could also be as small as more black students leading by example and breaking the uncomfortable social barriers that keep other black students from wanting to participate in honors or advanced classes.Imagine the progress we would see in our district if students, staff, administration and parents acted on the goal of equity in education.

Black students make up 52 percent of the high school student body and 46 percent of the district enrollment, yet they do not receive the same Shaker experience as their white peers.

We, as a district and community, know and talk about this. We need to do more, because if we continue the same efforts we have always made, the results will be the same.

It's time to change the methods by which we approach these inequities, instead of continuing to let our students of color experience a separate education.

If we are successful, maybe it won't take another 66 years to integrate Shaker classes.

A CHANGE

With his enthusiastic personality, prompt responses to student suggestions and willingness to act, Principal Eric Juli is helping Shaker recalibrate

Mae Nagusky

WE CAN SUPPORT

The Editorial Board

"Make it a great day, or not. The choice is yours."

Principal Eric Juli's words ring through the loudspeakers every morning and leave a lasting impact on students. Reciting them at the start of every day has become a tradition.

Juli's efforts to rebuild the relationship among teachers, students and the administration have not gone unnoticed in the few months he has led the school. Addressing the audience in a toga during the Hall of Fame assembly (he was "double booked" with the annual Latin chariot race) showed that he is more involved than previous administrators.

His presence around the school shows his commitment to bettering relationships and ensuring that everyone begins to feel comfortable with the new principal. We do not want our appreciation for him to go unheard.

Teachers feel as if they can speak up and come to him with problems and concerns, which is especially important in the wake of last year's administrative failures. He carries himself with

a cheerful presence that makes him easy to approach — whether or not a student is active in leadership groups.

We appreciate his morning welcomes at the main entrance. We recognize his presence at community events; he supports students by consistently attending athletic events, artistic performances and National Collegiate Athletic Association signing days. He writes a weekly "SHHS News and Notes" and emails it out to notify staff of events, including all home athletic contests; to thank teachers and staff who are doing great things; and to invite staff to discuss what they value and what the high school should become.

Juli's efforts to raise teacher morale and encourage high standards for education are notable. When he delivered personalized "You Crushed It!" certificates and ice-cold Crush sodas to every staff member one day, he boosted spirits and helped ensure a good start to their year.

And while everyone might not have the same taste in music, Juli's decision to play three minutes of songs from his diverse playlist during the passing periods is an upbeat and welcomed addition to the school day.

He responds to requests for help with genuine ideas and solutions. He replies to students' emails with ways to resolve an issue or with insight into why a decision was made.

At the start of the year, a student emailed Juli because the district WiFi blocked his access to YouTube during class. Juli responded that he understood that some students will break rules set in place by the schools, but his intention is for Chromebooks to enhance learning. Then he promptly unblocked it.

The senior class has had three different principals in four years. We needed someone who is reliable, hardworking, communicative and steady, and that is Juli.

In addition, when a student asked Juli about the chances of creating an all gender restroom at the high school, he responded the next day to set up a meeting with that student and others about that possibility. He then went around the building with those students to count every restroom and determine a solution.

Juli walks around the lunchroom, some days greeting students in a Red Raider mascot suit and other days dragging along a trash can to encourage caring for our school.

Each unique way he involves himself with students makes him a familiar face -- and someone we can trust to keep our school running smoothly.

On Nov. 22, Juli put the high school into lockdown to ensure students' safety after a fight in the cafeteria resumed in the hallway outside the library just before the end of seventh period. Before announcing the lockdown, he was striving with teachers, administrators and security staff to subdue and separate the fighting students. At the same time, he made quick decisions for the good of the school.

It is important that our principal is a good role model with whom we can easily interact. The senior class has had three different principals in four years. We needed someone who is reliable, hardworking, communicative and steady, and that is Juli.

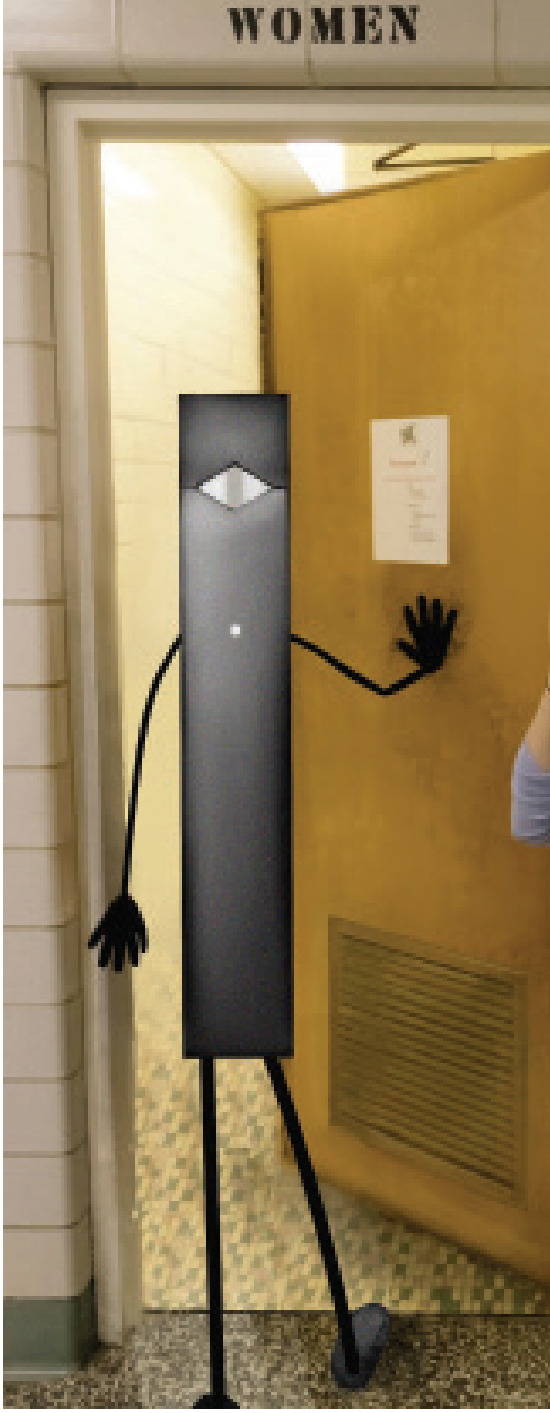
The school year is long, and strong leaders sometimes make decisions that people do not agree with. However, the best leaders make the unpopular decisions anyway because they deem best for the schools, and they work hard to explain and defend them. After the events that transpired last year, a leadership change was needed to move Shaker in a positive direction.

Juli's actions thus far represent what Shaker has been looking for: a uniter.

‘I am Pee-ved’

Grace Wilkinson offers advice about Shaker Heights High School’s most trying issues

Grace Wilkinson OPS Editor



Dear Grace,

Good morrow! I’m a junior at Shaker Heights High School. I arrive to school at around 7:30 every morning and typically dine on a breakfast I purchase from the cafeteria. Waiting for me every day are little cylinders of joy: Dunkin’ Donuts Cookies and Cream Iced Coffee. These little guys just get me. I guzzle down about three, or as many as my gullet can handle. I only cut myself off once my belt is dressed in cap and gown, ready for a notch graduation. Let me tell ya, it has not been an easy road.

With this daily decision, I am forced to retreat to the loo at least once a class period. The upside? My calves have never looked better! You could crush a baker’s dozen of walnuts with those things. The downside? As I make the trot toward the lavatory every day, I am overcome by a paralyzing fear (which is not good for my bladder, mind you).

And yes, I do know the cause. It spawns from the knowledge that I will enter the lavatory and most likely NOT be greeted by a genteel washroom attendant who is waiting to dry my paws, baby bird-feed a mint into my mouth, and tell me I don’t need to look in the mirror because I’m already perfect.

Nay, I will be greeted by the dreaded beings of the bathroom — the bathroom gremlins, if you will — the Juuling Jamboree.

They lurk in the lavatory, waiting for the creak of the bathroom door to sound. On this cue, they channel a middle school theater prodigy as they, accompanied by jazz hands, sing “SHOWTIME!” and assume their onstage positions. What follows is a musical number in which I try to avoid the glazed-over eye contact of my peers while they do a dance of puff, puff, pass. As I usher myself through their army, I’m overwhelmed by the same feeling I used to get when breaking through a wall of comrades during the once-beloved childhood game Red Rover.

When I finally find myself in a stall, I am distracted by the green apple smell of liquid cancer that lingers so powerfully in my nostrils that I forget to pee. I resort to just blowing my nose and, defeated, exit my stall. You win this time, Mr. Juul.

As I depart the stall and make a grand re-entrance to my high school’s very own smoke lounge, I try to avoid any interaction that would inspire one of the Juuls to offer me a single puff. Some evasive tactics are tucking and re-tucking my shirt, acting like I’m incredibly nervous about the cleanliness of my hands, and pretending that I am deaf.

David Vahey and Alona Miller

Suddenly, a sense of familiarity washes over me. I'm reminded of my great aunt's home, where cats lie on every surface. Some of the Juuling Janes perch on the lip of cement underneath the mirrors, some stand behind bathroom stall doors, some occupy the sink and some cough up hairballs from the overuse of nicotine (similar to my aunt's Siamese cat, Raphael).

Grace, I've been reading your column for years and have learned so much from your generosity and charisma. You are also gorgeous. Please, I beg you, help me find a way to eliminate these interactions from my daily routine.

Pee-ved

Dearest Pee-ved,

Hey, you! I'm glad to hear from ya. I'm sorry (and honestly, a little put off) to hear about your bladder. Boy, am I glad I'm not you! Get a grip, woman.

I did once have a yorkie, ya know, the pooch. A beautiful girl named Priscilla who just couldn't find it in herself to not wet the bed. After several visits to the vet, I decided to take matters into my own hands. My solution? I purchased one of those little doggie diapers for the girl. I am given no choice but to offer the same advice to you.

Honestly, they can be stylish. Throw a good ol' fashioned Aeropostale belt on that baby and strut right into Heinen's — you'll be turnin' heads, sugar!

I will add, you're not the first struggling teen to bring this issue to me. Do you know how many kids have been locked in the chamber of nicotine addiction all because they need to relieve themselves? Well, me neither, but my guess is at least one or two.

Just last week, a petition was created by an anonymous high schooler to restore the Egress to its original 1980s use: a smoking lounge. The name would then be changed to the "E-(boy)gress."

Discussions are ongoing, but things are not looking good. Juuling is a sticky situation in high schools.

For those struggling with the effect that Juuling can have on an innocent lamb, might I refer you to a "The Real Cost" vaping commercial?

All jokes aside, Pee-ved, the Juuling epidemic, especially in teens, is a true problem. For those who are trapped in its Blue Razz'd grip: Hey! It's not your fault. We all find ourselves in troublesome phases. I will, however, add the following: C'mon guys. People are dying from this activity. I'm not sure how to include a graph in this newspaper, but if I did, I would use one that shows teenagers' deaths in relation to Juuling. If you think you have to quit but don't know where to start, talk to an adult.

Pee-ved, I hope that you can find it in you to accept the fact that kids who find comfort in a Juul are no different than you. Sure, you may question their decisions, but they'll learn the cost of their actions sooner or later. For now, I suggest either sporting the Priscilla technique or continuing with your bathroom routine. Who knows, perhaps you'll even make some friends along the way.

Good luck.

Grace Wilkinson

From the Middle School Stage to Playhouse Square

Junior Thomas Schinabeck plays at venues such as Ohio Theatre and Night Town as he works to become a professional musician

Erin Williams Profile Reporter

Junior Thomas Schinabeck grew up playing sports and hanging outside with his older brother. He never thought of playing music, let alone how music would become an essential part of his life.

"I wasn't really into it right from the beginning," said Schinabeck, who first took interest in music when his older brother began playing trombone. After a kid on his bus said that he was interested in alto saxophone, he decided to take it up.

During third grade, he started taking alto saxophone lessons with Ken Legrand, a music teacher at the high school. "I learned most of the stuff I know from him, because I was taking lessons with him for so long," Schinabeck said.

When Dominick Farinacci, a professional jazz trumpeter, came to Cleveland in 2017 in search of musicians for his band Spirit of the Groove, he searched among high school, college and local adult musicians. Schinabeck began to take music seriously when he caught that attention of Farinacci, who

Schinabeck performs at BLU Jazz+ in Akron Sept. 26. **Photo by Rob Sondles.**

heard him play at the middle school. He then chose Schinabeck to be in Spirit of the Groove.

The band practices three days a week, and plays at Night Town, a jazz club in Cleveland Heights, on the last Sunday of each month. They do covers and arrangements of songs across musical genres and eras.

"That's when I started getting into music, because I was playing with all these really good people and some other people close to my age," Schinabeck said. He credits Farinacci with most of his success, because Farinacci has set up many shows and opportunities for him. "Basically all the stuff that I've done was through him," Schinabeck said.

After Schinabeck's first week of rehearsals with Spirit of the Groove, he went to a show at Night Town, where Farinacci and another of his bands were playing. The band invited Schinabeck to join them on stage. Since then, he has played with Farinacci's bands in about 10-15 shows at both Night Town and The Bop Stop on the West Side.

He also played at the Cuyahoga Community College Jazz Fest last year with Farinacci. They played with Terence Blanchard, a five-time Grammy winner, who has composed more than 40 film scores for movies such as "Barbershop" (2002), "Love and Basketball" (2000) and "BlacKkKlansman" (2018).

Schinabeck performs with Spirit of the Groove at Night Town Nov. 10. **Photo by Rob Sondles.**

The biggest show he did with Farinacci was an event at Ohio Theatre at Playhouse Square called "Shaking With Laughter," which sold out 2,779 seats. The show raised money for research on Parkinson's disease.

"The really cool thing about playing jazz music is that it's pretty hard to make mistakes," Schinabeck said. "Because if I'm playing a solo, then everyone else is constantly trying to make you sound good, and if I do something that doesn't really sound right, then they'll make it sound right. With that mindset, it's not so nerve-racking to play in front of a lot of people."

Schinabeck spends much of his time playing music, so most of his closest friends are also musicians. Graeham Guerin is one of Schinabeck's best friends. They met through Spirit of the Groove. "I think he's the best bass player I've ever played with," Schinabeck stated.

Guerin returned the compliment. "Thomas is fire at the sax, and he is already on a professional level. He's crazy and he knows his stuff," he said. Additionally, he said Schinabeck is one of the best in the band and commented on how helpful, good at multitasking and respectful he is to everyone he encounters.

Over the summer, Schinabeck attended two audition-only music camps. One was the Jazz at Lincoln Center Summer Workshop in New York City. The other was the Skidmore Jazz Camp at Skidmore College in upstate New York. Last year, he earned a scholarship to attend a five-week program at the Berklee College of Music in Boston.

"It was sweet to be able to see what it was like to actually be at a music college," Schinabeck said.

Music, while a positive aspect in Schinabeck's life, has forced him to let go of other extracurriculars. One example is sports. He did football, swimming and lacrosse in middle school and played golf and lacrosse freshman year. "I didn't [play lacrosse] sophomore year just because the stuff with this band was totally overlapping. Like, the shows were overlapping the games, and it sucked," he said. "But, I'm going to be

a professional musician, so I had to make the sacrifice."

Schinabeck's parents are supportive of his music career. "At first, they were kind of iffy, because they're both doctors, so they have totally different mindsets than someone that's going to go to college for music," Schinabeck said. Despite this difference, his parents and brother remain his biggest supporters.

For the past four years, they have taken him to jam sessions at the Cleveland Music Settlement, which occur about three Saturdays a month, from 11 p.m. to 2 a.m.

"I actually really enjoy it, to be honest," his mother, Anne Schinabeck, said. "I get the opportunity to see him play, and I get to see how fun it is for him and how much joy it brings him. Sometimes, if I have some work to do for my job, I'll just bring my laptop and I'll sit back in the corner and I get my work done with the best background music ever."

"It was a little bit harder to imagine a career in music for our child, but what really became obvious over time is that he has found something that brings him so much joy, a kind of joy that I think many people go through life without ever finding. So then it became really easy to support his dreams because of that," she said. "He works so hard, harder than anyone I know at his craft, and so it's not very hard to support somebody who's already given 150 percent."

Schinabeck has also been in marching band, wind ensemble and jazz ensemble since freshman year. He enjoys playing classical music in wind ensemble, which he doesn't usually have the opportunity to do. He said that wind ensemble director William Hughes is a great teacher.

Hughes described Schinabeck's music talents as "next level" and "mature for his years of playing." He said that although there are many great players on alto saxophone, Schinabeck is among the best.

Schinabeck also has a music-focused Instagram page, @thomasschinabeckmusic., which he manages himself.

Schinabeck didn't consider going to a music high school, as there aren't any nearby. He's glad that he attends Shaker, because that is where he really got into music. "From Woodbury, I was in the jazz band, and my private teacher from the beginning works here at Shaker, and he ran the jazz band," Schinabeck said. If he hadn't gone to Shaker, he also wouldn't have met Farinacci.

Another of Schinabeck's idols is Dave Sterner, his music teacher from last year. He switched to Sterner because he had been Legrand's student for almost seven years and wanted to experience a different point of view.

> "He practiced immensely last year, and he grew a ton as a musician."
>
> Dave Sterner
> *Schinabeck's music teacher*

"He's a very intelligent young man. He came on and he practiced immensely last year, and he grew a ton as a musician," Sterner said.

Schinabeck was able to imitate a certain musician and play their music back for Sterner by memory — which is a very important aspect of playing jazz — just a week after the assignment was given to him.

"So that's unique — not a lot of kids at his age are doing that, so he seems highly motivated to be successful as a musician," Sterner said.

He considers Schinabeck to be very humble, despite his success. Sterner hopes Schinabeck will at least major in music, and he hopes he will attend a high-profile college or university so he can get the best experience possible.

After high school, Schinabeck would like to go to college or live in New York City. However, he hopes to eventually tour abroad. "Then, I think I just want to travel all over the world with my band," Schinabeck said. He would play with other people's bands, too, "but definitely my band, playing my songs. That would be cool."

DEFYING THE ODDS

STUDENTS ATHLETES MUST ENDURE AN ARDUOUS PROCESS TO MOVE ON TO COLLEGE SPORTS

Ezra Marks Raider Zone Editor

It might be easier to become one of the 1 percent than the 2 percent.

Some of the 1 percent — the richest segment of Americans — may have inherited their fortunes. But without exception, the 2 percent of high school athletes who manage to join the National Collegiate Athletic Association on scholarship every year earn it.

That 2 percent represents a mere 160,000 of the 8 million athletes who compete in United States high school sports each year.

Shaker graduate and former National Football League and Ohio State University football player Nate Clements ('98) explained how he woke at 5 a.m. every morning while in high school, prepared breakfast for himself and his mother and came to the high school to work out before class. "Being consistent in what you have a passion for will allow you to reach your goal," he told the audience at the Oct. 11 Hall of Fame Assembly.

Also graduating from Shaker, Nasir Rashid ('19), who now plays football at the U.S. Air Force Academy, said the recruitment process is, "like riding a roller coaster. I enjoyed some parts of it, but a lot of it was frustrating, and it can be for a lot of high school players. When you're being recruited, things are different for everyone."

A high school athlete can be recruited to three divisions of the NCAA: Division I, Division II and Division III, which are based on school size and athletic budget.

The NCAA provides statistics on the ratio of athletes to students at each division. Division I schools have one athlete for every 25 students, Division II schools have one for every 11 and Division III have one for every six.

Last year, six Shaker student-athletes signed their letters of intent to play to play Division I.

"The dream really started when I first started playing baseball," said senior Calvin Brown, a University of Pennsylvania baseball recruit. "Not just for the notoriety, but just for the love of the game. I really enjoy playing, and it's kind of hard to envision myself stopping."

Cornell University wrestling recruit Najee Lockett said, "After years of wrestling, I realized I wanted to fulfill my potential at the next level. I wanted to fill my athletic capacity, along with my intellectual and academic capacity. I don't want to do one and neglect the other. I want to do both. I worked as hard as I possibly could on and off the mat."

University of Michigan recruit Lora Clarke described what motivated her to pursue college field hockey. "I remember, on November 2, when I played in the state final game my freshman year, and we lost. Until that day, I thought I was going to play ice hockey in college, but after we lost that game, that feeling — I can't even put words to it — I just wanted to be able to play field hockey all the time."

Every year, $3.5 billion in athletic scholarships are given to more than 180,000 athletes. To be an eligible NCAA athlete, you must earn above a 2.3 grade point average and an SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score — the highest scores from each section added together — of 68.

Clarke said sports gave her a great opportunity to attend a selective school. "I have good grades, and I know I work hard in school, but my standardized test scores aren't as good as most people's. Michigan has everything I could possibly want," she said.

> "I took the SAT six or seven times. I took the ACT once, and I knew that I would keep on trying."
>
> Nate Clements ('98)
> *former NFL and Ohio State University football player*

"I wasn't a straight-A student, by far. I got mostly B's, but I worked just as hard — academically, I worked just as hard — just so I could play football," Clements said. He also described how hard he worked to get good test scores. "I took the SAT six or seven times. I took the ACT once, and I knew that I would keep on trying," Clements said. He said he practiced only briefly with his team after school so that he could attend SAT tutoring classes. Any athlete must balance their time, as in-season practices for sports at Shaker are typically 4-6:30 p.m., five days a week, with games or meets throughout the week. But athletes who earn NCAA scholarships must do more.

"A lot of mentors taught me it's not enough to just go to practice 4 to 6 every day," Brown said. "You got to work before school, after school and do 100 pushups a day when you're 14 years old. That all developed into a work ethic that helped me propel myself," Brown said. According to Prep Baseball Report, Brown is ranked 42nd in the state.

Clarke said she had to give up social events in order to pursue her dream. "Every weekend, my friends would be hanging out, and I would just be gone doing a field hockey clinic, whether it was college clinic or working with my club coach or just putting in extra work. I don't think people realize that I literally put my heart and soul and my everything into field hockey," she said.

Clements also described having to give up certain things he liked to balance academics and athletics. "I had to sacrifice a lot of luxury [and] time," Clements said. "Sacrifice going to the latest parties, going to hang out."

In addition to practicing

with their school teams, athletes hoping to play in college typically practice during the offseason with club teams, trainers or camps. Clarke is a member of the USA Women's National Indoor Development Team, Brown is a member of the B2 Bulls travel baseball team, and Lockett is a member of USA Wrestling. Ohio High School Athletic Association rules state athletes are not legally allowed to play club and school concurrently.

Brown credits Zak Blair, his club coach, for encouraging Division I programs to take an interest in him. "You can't find anyone better than him, as far as recruiting is concerned. His contact list is huge — people from the West Coast all the way to the East Coast. He opens doors for you."

Blair played baseball at Winthrop University and Mercyhurst University. He also played two seasons for the Chicago Cubs and has connections to prestigious college baseball programs.

Blair stressed that participating in both club and school baseball is vital to being recruited. "Both school and club are equally important," he said. "What I found over the years is, you get seen at camps and tournaments over the offseason, and then they follow you into your high school season. A lot of people seem to assume club is way more important, and school doesn't matter. That is not the case."

Highlight videos are also important for recruitment. "You have to have early film, mainly sophomore and junior year,"

> "I don't think people realize that I literally put my heart and soul and my everything into field hockey."
>
> Lora Clarke
> *senior*

Senior Lora Clarke dribbles the ball down the field against Columbus Academy in the state championship game Nov. 2. **Photo by David Vahey.**

Senior Avery Dunn awaits the snap in his last high school game against Euclid Nov. 1. Dunn recently made a verbal commitment to play football at Michigan State University. Nine Division I programs offered him scholarships. **Photo by David Vahey.**

said senior football player Avery Dunn, who has verbally commited to Michigan State University. "If you have the film, then you have to go to a lot of camps and meet coaches. You have to pass the eye test, and you get that through offseason work."

"People think they get 50 calls from DI colleges, and that's just not how the process works," Brown said. "You really have to work on sending video out and getting in front of coaches. Especially now, because it has gotten so competitive for every spot."

Another aspect of the college recruitment process is player ranking. Sports media organizations such as ESPN or 247Sports list players by factors like size, speed and athletic ability. The higher ranked a player is, the higher the demand is for that player. According to 247Sports, Lockett is ranked third in Ohio for the 170-lb. weight class, while Dunn is ranked as 79th.

"You can have a player who has great stature and has the perfect body and then have a few highlights and get Big 10 offers," Dunn said. "You can also have a player who has amazing highlights but also doesn't have the grades and is small and can struggle to get Division I offers."

Blair dismisses the idea that rankings are 100 percent accurate. "Ultimately, beyond everything else, the biggest thing is pure desire and the want to be great," he said. "I've worked with a lot of good players, but only a handful of them have that inner passion for the game and are willing to sacrifice things that a normal average athlete that wouldn't be willing to sacrifice. I call it the 'killer instinct.' Only some athletes have it, and that's the difference maker."

Despite all the efforts required to attract college scouts, deciding which offer to accept can be the most challenging part of the process.

"Picking a school to commit to is very stressful," Dunn said. "During the season, it's hard, because you have a lot on your plate and you can't really focus on schools you want to go to."

However, Lockett said the decision was easy for him once he received an offer from his top school. "I really had my mind on Cornell since sixth grade, simply because it really is a school that values academics along with sports," he said. "Considering my athletic and academic inclinations, it was truly something I thought that I should pursue. It was a no-brainer for me."

Brown and Clarke both signed their letters of intent Nov. 13; Lockett and Dunn, however, will sign Feb. 5. Dunn considered offers from nine Division I schools. Rashid offered encouragement to young athletes who aspire to play in college.

He said, "What I'd tell someone who wants to follow in my footsteps is to do better than I ever did. Go harder and live in the moment. Things go fast. Focus on your passion and put in the hours upon hours of work if this is really what you want."

Journalism I Reporters Ari Green, Chethan Chandra and Ruth Wilson contributed reporting.

Listen to a conversation with the reporter who wrote this story in our podcast, **The Shake.**

A NEW BRAND OF FOOTBALL

HEAD COACH ALEX NICHOLSON SETS ABOUT CREATING A FRESH ENVIRONMENT AMONG HIS STUDENT-ATHLETES

Ben Cox Raider Zone Reporter

Alex Nicholson guides the football team to a win versus Garfield Heights at Russell H. Rupp Stadium Aug. 30. **Photo by David Vahey.**

As soon as Alex Nicholson was appointed head coach, he began rebranding Shaker football. Like any rebranding effort, it started with a logo.

Nicholson created a new, interlocking SH logo that he believes represents Shaker as a community.

"I knew right away that I wanted to pay homage to the old 'SH,' " he said. "Shaker is very unique in the diversity we have, but we still are one town, so the interlocking of the 'SH' creates that unity, and that's part of our culture as one town and one community."

The logo was painted onto the high school's North Gym floor over the summer and displayed on the football team's helmets and gear this season.

With that, Nicholson's presence became visible, and he started to build a competitive culture that focused on improving players' attitudes and work ethic. This effort began with weightlifting sessions every week after he was hired in February.

"I want kids in that weight room because they have to learn our culture. Part of all this is a rebranding of the program, and any time you take over a program, your first year is always going to be trying to get things the way you want them," Nicholson said. "I wouldn't say this program was broken, but it wasn't the way I wanted."

Nicholson moved to Shaker from Chicago in 2014 and worked as an assistant coach at Normandy High School and Brush High School before coming to Shaker. "We came for a freshman game, and I started to do more research, and as the years went on, I kept my eye on the school and knew it was a special place," he said.

In addition to his title as head coach of the football team, Nicholson is a certified physical education teacher and intervention specialist.

His first move as head coach was bringing in new staff: defensive coordinator DeMarcus Monroe, offensive coordinator Paul Ghude and offensive line coach Adam Mott. All three coached with Nicholson at Brush for three years.

"Nicholson and I had talked about working together when one of us became a head coach since the first year we worked together, so when he got the job here, he called me, and we talked about me joining the staff," Ghude said.

"He always strives to put our student athletes in the best position possible for them to be successful," Ghude said. "He is constantly working for our student-athletes, and he genuinely cares about all of their well-being, which, to me, is one of the most important qualities of a coach."

Senior running back Victor Ford Jr. said that Nicholson quickly engaged with the team. "He was fast. Everything was fast — he was hardcore," Ford said. "We got straight to work when he first came."

"The interlocking of the 'SH' creates that unity, and that's part of our culture as one town and one community."

Alex Nicholson
head football coach

Nicholson added incentives, including receiving free gear, such as sweatshirts and backpacks, for showing up to lifting and summer practice, which attracted more players.

"We worked out for two months straight, no days off," Ford said. "If you came, he surprised us with a bag and gear." Nicholson also encouraged students who hadn't been on the football team to participate, and the roster grew from 52 to 88 players, a 59 percent increase. The bigger roster helps Shaker compete in a conference with an average of 85 players per team. He also began choosing a scout team player of the week. This allows players on the freshman and junior varsity teams to dress varsity and be honored at practice.

"The scout team player of the week is really a great new addition to the program because it credits hard work that is not always noticed or seen. It motivates those who play on the scout teams to go harder every day in practice and compete for the scout team chain. It recognizes the hardest working player of that week on scout team," senior linebacker Avery Dunn said.

A freshman player of the week is chosen to dress with the varsity team every week as well. "I think the staple of every good high school program is a freshman team," Nicholson said. He added that schools such as Mentor and Solon, which routinely excel in the Greater Cleveland Conference, take pride in raising disciplined teams, starting with the freshman.

Nicholson has been working closely with staff and monitoring players in hopes of improving the football team's GPA. After the first semester of 2018-19, the team's average GPA was 2.55. According to Nicholson, the GPA is currently 2.75.

"He has interactions with us through emails and keeping track with students on learning plans, but he does support them and gives us awareness of what their needs are so that we can support those kids in the classroom," math teacher Walter Slovikovski said.

Nicholson said, "I tell the kids all the time: Your GPA and your test scores — that's where you get paid."

All players are eligible for SAT and End of Course Exam preparation, as well as help from current and former staff.

"We're working with several former teachers and several community members, starting a process of figuring out the best way for our kids to be prepared for standardized testing, as well as what's the best way for our kids to be successful in the classroom," Nicholson said.

Nicholson has worked closely with colleagues he has met through the years to give his team

Nicholson discusses a play with the team during a home Friday night football game Aug. 30. Nicholson said, "Although the game was sloppy, it was an important win for this community." **Photo by David Vahey.**

Nicholson teaches weight training class during tenth period. **Photo by David Vahey.**

the best opportunities to play football in college. "Nicholson definitely has a presence, whether it's just reaching out to people he knows through the connections he's made, or Twitter, even the guys that aren't the big names, he's still trying to help them out and get them some looks," senior defensive back Spencer Glatley said.

Players such as Dunn who has verbally commited to and recieved scholarship from Michigan State Univeristy, had help from Nicholson throughout the college recruitment process."At the beginning of the recruiting process, we didn't have a coach at the time, so I was really doing everything on my own, contacting coaches and schools," Dunn said.

He continued, "Once Coach Nicholson got here, he really guided me through the whole process, and he became a great outlet I didn't have before."

> "I want kids in that weight room because they have to learn our culture."
>
> Alex Nicholson
> *head football coach*

The Raiders finished this season 2-8. However, in their first game of the year, they beat Garfield Heights in a Friday afternoon thriller at home Sept. 30. That game offered a glimpse of the brand Nicholson is striving to build. The Raiders also put up a school record 70 points in an Oct. 11 defeat of Elyria.

Despite the losing record, Nicholson maintained the same energy and discipline in and out of school. "I talk to the team on Saturdays and tell them that their beliefs drive their behavior, which then produces an outcome," he said. "We have to believe in what we're doing."

One student's reflections on the allure of vaping

EVERYBODY, BREATHE

Jordan Green

Alone in my room at 10 p.m., without enough energy to do more homework, but too much energy to go to bed, I needed some entertainment. I'm not much of a Netflix guy, and video games aren't really my thing. So, naturally, I posted a controversial opinion in the "Living in Shaker Heights" Facebook group. That's always a good time.

The topic: vaping.

It's an epidemic, no doubt. And it seems like the stories of kids developing rare lung diseases, or even dying, are growing more frequent and closer to home.

It also feels like there's a circular battle going on among kids, parents and the big vape companies. Parents are angry at their kids for vaping, kids are angry at their parents for punishing them, parents are angry at vape companies for hurting their kids, and on and on.

I decided to share my view with the Facebook group. I said that vape companies deliberately target kids and prey on them for their own gain. That kids are victims, and parents need to treat them as such. That they need help, not punishment.

All of this expressed with, admittedly, a fair

amount of uncalled for hyperbolic language. Subsequently, the comment section became chaotic, a type of parent vs. parent war zone. These four replies best summarize the varied responses:

"Bravo Jordan! Now hopefully you and your like-minded peers will make it uncool to be duped by corporate fat cats sitting in a room devising marketing plans to lure kids into the trap."

"Typical progressive BS! Don't blame someone for their actions, blame the marketing department of the company. Nobody is making your child vape, they are choosing to do so. Instead, teach them about personal responsibility."

"This may have made sense when vaping was new and kids were not aware of the risks involved. But kids should know better by now and not start in the first place. That certainly doesn't absolve the companies, but the kids who start now shouldn't be viewed as completely innocent victims."

"ohhh I get it it's a kid giving parenting advice."

What a lot of parents also fail

> It can't really be that bad for me if all these successful and seemingly healthy people are doing it.

Alona Miller

to recognize about the epidemic is how much the mob mentality plays into it. Different from simple peer pressure, kids (like myself) didn't start vaping just because others were doing it and we wanted to fit in.

Certainly peer pressure contributed, but I can attest to the fact that there was no increased clout level one got for picking up a JUUL that was significant enough to knowingly start risking our lives. It was because the mob mentality convinced us that there we no actual, dangerous health effects.

Sure, my mom could send me as many articles as she wanted about vape-related illnesses, but when I saw high school athletes or academic stand-outs doing it, I became brainwashed to tell myself, "It can't really be that bad for me if all these successful and seemingly healthy people are doing it."

All that on top of the fact that every time a news story broke about a kid getting hurt vaping, these seemingly exemplary kids would be the first to say, "Well, the stuff he was using was laced," or, "That kid was doing it 50x more than we do."

All this put together hopefully makes it easier for outsiders (aka parents) to understand how the epidemic has spiraled out of control.

The conversation around vaping, however, is unlike most other topics. Why? Because we essentially know nothing about it.

Discussions turn into arguments when we care more about being right than about being understood.

Unlike the resources of a WWI historian, or a marine biologist, there's not a whole lot of data we can pull from; just some speculatory conclusions derived from only a couple years' worth of evidence.

Although it seems pretty credible to predict that inhaling FDA-banned substances isn't great for one's lungs, the sad truth is that that most points made in the vaping debate must be followed by saying "but we don't know for sure yet." And that leaves an unusual amount of room for strictly emotional responses.

What I learned from this Facebook discussion goes way beyond vaping, and I likely wouldn't have been able to learn it if I was constantly battling with my parents about vaping.

They knew I did it occasionally and were disappointed, but not angry at me. They sent me articles to make sure I understood the risks and they tried to understand why, if I was so smart, I was doing something so seemingly stupid. They genuinely tried to understand.

The space they gave me to decide for myself, and the way I felt so defensive when many people in the Facebook group attacked or belittled me, helped me understand how ineffective it is to discuss controversial issues with polarized, inflammatory and accusatory language.

Discussions turn into arguments when we care more about being right than about being understood.

So parents: Try to listen and hear your kids without judgment. And kids: We should probably listen with an open mind to the people who care most about us.

Only then can the real conversations begin.

TEXTS AND CONTEXT

Choosing what works to teach might be one of the hardest tasks an English teacher has to face. There are just SO MANY great texts -- how do I narrow it down? And what about all those boxes I need to check in my curriculum: It needs to be challenging but accessible, engaging but intellectually rigorous; I need to include a diversity of authors by gender and ethnicity; I want students to explore a variety of genres and media.

Valerie Doersen

In many ways, "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian" by Sherman Alexie was a perfect book: An author from an underrepresented minority pens an engaging bildungsroman, swinging from laugh-out-loud humor to tugging on the emotional heart strings, all while dealing with big, real-life issues. It even has pictures!

When sexual misconduct allegations against Alexie first came to light in 2018, it was right before we were about to start the book in my ninth-grade honors class, and not that many people had heard about them.

I decided to wait until students brought up the issue. We discussed it briefly toward the end of the unit and moved on. Last year, however, with the Me Too movement gaining momentum, I knew we'd have to confront the matter head-on, and so I brought up Alexie's transgressions right at the start. I let my students know that we teachers had reservations about the book, and that I would be interested to hear their take on the issue.

Teachers sometimes talk about the "magic lesson," when a perfect storm of teachable moment and student engagement come together and the results exceed all expectations.

That was my experience teaching "The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian" last year. Throughout the unit, I was astounded by the maturity and insight my students brought to bear on our conversations.

I found myself recounting entire seminars to colleagues in the department office. The connections and observations students made let them explore ethics and morality in ways that I don't know would have been possible with a less controversial text.

They discussed objectification of women and toxic masculinity; they explored cultural appropriation and media representation and the importance of giving voice to marginalized people; they debated what to do when bad men make good art.

Ultimately, they were nearly as torn about the text as I was.

As satisfying as it is to condemn all offenders with a broad brush, I believe there is a spectrum to bad behavior.

There is a difference between Al Franken and Bill Cosby, between John Lasseter and Harvey Weinstein, and between Sherman Alexie and R. Kelly. Many of my students recognized this, too, and saw enough value in the text to argue for keeping it; very few felt strongly that it should be removed, but the exchange of ideas between the various camps was a learning experience that cannot be replicated artificially.

This year, my plan is to teach the book.

I don't know if we'll capture lightning in a bottle again, but if we can, it will be worth it.

That is not to say, however, that I'm not on the lookout for a replacement. I (along with other ninth grade teachers) read about two dozen books this summer for that purpose, and the search continues.

If we can find another "perfect book" without so much baggage, great -- and I've read a few with promise.

No matter what we read, though, I believe my students are capable, engaged and sophisticated enough to navigate the challenges that any text -- or its author's life -- offers.

OPS

Rookie Mistake

Chaos ensued as a freshman forgot to close out of a YouTube tab on his newly school-issued Chromebook. As he pranced into Physical Science Honors and threw open his Chromebook, “Sweatshirt” by Jacob Sartorius greeted the ears of his teacher and fellow classmates.

MOST LIKELY TO BE HEARD IN THE HALLS

“So, do you like your new coach?”

“What did you say? I can’t hear you over
‘First things first I’ma say all the words inside my head I’m fired up and tired of the way that things have been, oh ooh The way that things have been, oh ooh Second thing second Don’t you tell me what you think that I can be I’m the one at the sail, I’m the master of my sea, oh ooh The master of my sea, oh ooh I was broken from a young age Taking my sulking to the masses Write down my poems for the few That looked at me, took to me, shook to me, feeling me Singing from heartache from the pain Taking my message from the veins Speaking my lesson from the brain Seeing the beauty through the You made me a, you made me a believer, believer **(PAIN, PAIN)** You break me down, you build me up, believer, believer **(PAIN)** Oh let the bullets fly, oh let them rain My life, my love, my drive, it came from **(PAIN)** You made me a, you made me a believer, believer Third things third Send a prayer to the ones up above All the hate that you’ve heard has turned your spirit to a dove, oh ooh Your spirit up above, oh ooh I was choking in the crowd Building my rain up in the cloud Falling like ashes to the ground Hoping my feelings, they would drown But they never did, ever lived, ebbing and flowing Inhibited, limited ‘Til it broke up and it rained down It rained down, like You made me a, you made me a believer, believer **(PAIN, PAIN)** You break me down, you built me up, believer, believer **(PAIN)** I let the bullets fly, oh let them rain My life, my love, my drive, it came from **(PAIN)** You made me a, you made me a believer, believer Last things last By the grace of the fire and the flames You’re the face of the future, the blood in my veins, oh ooh the blood in my veins, oh ooh But they never did, ever lived, ebbing and flowing Inhibited, limited ‘Til it broke up and it rained down It rained down, like You made me a, you made me a believer, believer **(PAIN, PAIN)** You break me down, you built me up, believer, believe **(PAIN)** I let the bullets fly, oh let them rain My life, my love, my drive, it came from **(PAIN)** You made me a, you made me a believer, believer’”

“Hey, how many likes do I have to get on TikTok to not take the final?”

5-Second Movie Review

“Frozen 2”
Very stressful
“Knives Out”
This is not about Rachael Ray! Please understand that.
“Joker”
A light hearted comedy for the whole family!
“The Irishman”
This review has been redacted as our sources took a snooze during the film

PSAT

Freshmen try to sneak into classrooms to take the PSAT, claiming that they didn’t want to feel left out when the memes arrived.

Juli’s Jubilee

Getting to know our princiPAL

Favorite Color?
Chartreuse
Favorite Pastimes?
Taxidermy and Shadow Puppeting
Favorite Flag?
Bolivian
Favorite Student?
None; he loves all of us equally <3.
Although, if he HAD to choose: Kid Cudi.
Favorite Board Game?
Operation
Favorite Food?
Green Quiche & Ham
Favorite Book?
The Dictionary

Songs Mr. Juli Most Likely Played at His Wedding

“Home”
Phillip Phillips
(The perfect song to sob to)
“Ironic”
Alanis Morissete
(Educational, with some zest)
“Radioactive”
Vintage Jazz / Beatbox Imagine Dragons Cover ft. Blake Lewis
(Powerful, calming, awesome)
“Peanut Butter Jelly Time”
Buckwheat Boyz
(A timeless hymn for all ages)

On June 17, 2018, Mr. Juli fought his way on stage at Blossom Music Center during an Imagine Dragons concert.

Wikimedia Commons
Edited by David Vahey